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THE TURN OF THE TIDE

THE turn of the year promises neither pause nor punctuation in any of the main theatres of the war. Movements are going on both in Russia and North Africa which may transform the outlook, but it would be rash to allow our imagination free play to complete them on the map. While national sentiment leads us to fix our eyes on the doings of the Eighth and the First Armies in the Mediterranean theatre, the scale of the Russian counter-offensives makes the Eastern Front still incomparably the more important of the two, and this for some months at least it is likely to remain. In looking back and forward we assuredly have the right to feel that during the latter half of 1942 the tide has turned in our favour. In August we faced everywhere a disturbing and anxious outlook. Rommel had driven our African army back to El Alamein and Mussolini had gone to the front to snatch from his allies the glory of heading their march into Alexandria—or was it to be Cairo? The Germans had fought their way into the suburbs of Stalingrad and few dared to hope that it could hold out. Had it fallen easily, the grandiose plan of a vast encircling movement up the Volga valley to take Moscow in the rear might have had some chance of success. Simultaneously, the two drives into the Caucasus were proceeding in their earlier phases with apparent ease. In the Far East, Japanese power was at its height and no one could then be sure that it had reached what is likely to be its maximum extension.

In retrospect we can now date the turn in our fortunes from September. Rommel attempted his attack on the El Alamein position and failed after a far from impressive effort. After a pause, Montgomery won his decisive victory and within a few days the Americans startled us by their landings in Morocco and Algeria. It is probable that Rommel will not try to make any prolonged or determined defence of Tripolitania. He is conducting his retreat with skill and has escaped the encirclement of his rearguard which Montgomery had planned. Will he now aim at holding the Mareth Line—that African copy of the Maginot Line, which the French built years ago to defend Tunisia from Libya?

German strategy, we take it, is not concerned with questions of territory or prestige. What it has to do is to deny to our shipping the use of the Sicilian Narrows. This it could do if it could make its foothold round Bizerta impregnable. But it may prefer, for a time at least, to hold the entire coast of Tunisia, from the Mareth Line to Bizerta. If our forces were stronger than they appear to be, this would obviously be a risky choice, for while Rommel at the Mareth Line faced Montgomery's attack from the East, his rear might be threatened by American, French or British forces advancing into the Tunisian interior. But as yet the United Nations have not brought the forces they possess in this theatre to bear on the decisive points. General Anderson's attack on the Tunis-Bizerta position, delivered with inadequate strength, has suffered a check. The Americans in Morocco and Algeria may have to watch Franco and Darlan. What use, if any, can be made of the considerable French army we do not know. It is, therefore, impossible to calculate how long it may take us to achieve our first main objective—to win for our shipping the use of the Sicilian Narrows.

When we turn to the Russian Front the outstanding fact is that Hitler made one of the central mistakes of his career when he over-ruled his generals and divided his forces between the Caucasian and the Stalingrad offensives. Either he underestimated Russia's strength, or he was in urgent need of oil. Stalin fell back, like Kutuzov in the Napoleonic campaign, and collected his reserves for a series of massive attacks which started with the approach of winter. A complicated set of concerted movements isolated the German besiegers round Stalingrad. A less successful attack round Rzhev in the centre served as a diversion. Since last Wednesday, what may turn out to be the most formidable of these counter-offensives began across the frozen Don on a broad front some distance below Voronezh. It swept forward with irresistible impetus, and after by-passing Millerovo it has now reached the important junction of Nikolskoe, 90 miles from Rostov. A second column is striking at right angles to the main advance from the East. The Germans are frank in admitting their danger. They must now mass such reserves as they possess to meet this threat, while at the same time from Kotelnikovo their relieving column tries to cut a way through the Russian circle to relieve their army before Stalingrad. One consequence of these offensives has been to stop both the advancing armies in the Caucasus. The Russians probably have two immediate objects in view. First, they hope to shatter or, better still, to capture von Hoth's encircled army before Stalingrad. Secondly, while they clear up the whole territory within the Don bend, could they hope to advance down the railway as far as Rostov? That may be a possible but it can handly be an easy success. If Rostov could be recovered, the two German armies in the Caucasus could only with difficulty be extricated. The Russians, it will be seen, are playing for very big stakes. On the most sober view, they have brought this year's German offensive to failure. But on a sanguine view they may do much more: they may so weaken the best German formations that henceforth the enemy will have to fight with depleted material and lowered morale on the defensive.

When we try to peer into the coming year the outstanding fact is the survival of our Russian ally, after two years of shattering blows and crippling losses, with her vigour still so little impaired that we have to reckon the Red Army still as the chief offensive factor on our side. Our African operations have drawn off some part of the *Luftwaffe* to her advantage. But they have not yet brought us in sight of the invasion of the European Continent for which we are looking. That must await the liquidation of Nehring's and Rommel's forces and the opening of the Narrows. Our strategy, perhaps inevitably, suffers from the wide dispersal of our forces from Persia, Irak and Syria all the way to Morocco. They served a purpose in the remoter stations of the Middle East, so long as we still had to fear a German march through the Caucusus, or a crossing of the Turkish Straits or a descent of airborne troops on Svria. With all these notions

it is probable that the German staff at one time played. But the time for any of them, we should judge, is past. May we hope, then, for some concentration of our scattered forces, which would economise shipping and bring us in sight of one of several alternative thrusts at "the soft under-belly of the Axis"? The preparation goes on. The R.A.F. continues to hammer the industrial cities and ports of Italy. It will, we trust, for the sake of civilisation continue to spare Florence and Rome. In Yugoslavia, the gallantry of the guerillas and the savagery of the enemy prepare a welcome for the first army of liberation that approaches—be it from Russia or from over-seas. In France, the tightening of the German fetters may have helped its people to forget the clouding of their confidence by our dealings with Darlan. Whatever it may be opportune to attempt in Italy or in the Balkan Peninsula, when the Mediterranean is cleared, it is in France that the decisive blow will have to be struck. To that, through the coming year, we, with all the martyred peoples of Europe, shall look forward with impatient hope. For us it will bring back the prospect of a normal life. For them it means escape from massacre and annihilation.

Mr. Morrison Gives a Lead

Mr. Herbert Morrison made an admirable speech at Swindon on Sunday on the occasion of his first appearance in public since he became a member of the War Cabinet. In effect Mr. Morrison was outlining a practicable post-war policy, taking the Beveridge Report as a starting point, but as no more than a starting point, for the new order of living. He insisted that, important as social security is, the mere provision of a living income for those in need affords no satisfactory basis for the planning of our economic life. We have to think in terms of production as well as of distribution of incomes—especially as redistribution is bound, under the existing social system, to take largely a lateral form. Mr. Morrison went on to outline the essentials of a post-war policy of State control in industry. Broadly, he divided industries into four groups: public utility services, which are themselves in the nature of monopolies; great industries which, while not constituting national monopolies, are bound in practice under modern conditions to develop along monopolistic lines; smaller and less monopolistic industries, in which individual enterprise still retains considerable value; and industries suitable for control by the Co-operative Movement. For the first group he suggested public corporations, for the second either similar corporations or "some form of management under a board of directors with a nationally nominated chairman." The third group, he suggested, we should in the main let alone, subject to the enforcement of a minimum code of conditions, while the fourth group should undergo considerable extension in the sphere of both production and marketing. Finally, Mr. Morrison insisted on the need for an annual "economic and industrial budget" parallel to the financial budget, and of the need for a planning in the difficult post-war period, hardly less extensive than that which is required for the purposes of war. This is a speech we have been waiting for, and we very much hope that in making it Mr. Morrison was expressing the views of the entire Labour group of Ministers.

Labour Plumps for the Beveridge Report

The National Council of Labour has weighed in heavily on the side of the Beveridge Report; and special Labour and Co-operative conferences are to be held throughout the country in order both to explain its provisions and to urge its immediate acceptance in principle by the Government. We feel sure the N.C.L. is right in taking this line. Many of its members would doubtless have preferred a method of financing the plan that would put a larger proportion of total immediate costs upon public funds, and a smaller proportion on contributions; and also a speedier bringing into full operation of the pensions scheme included in the plan. Some—probably a good many—would have much preferred the Report if Sir William Beveridge had agreed to make separate allowance for rent in estimating the amounts needed in course of sickness or unemployment. His answer to these critics, given in the Report itself, is that, if special rent allowances were accorded, the effect might be both to encourage a continuance of the existing anomalies in respect of rent, and to upset the fundamental principle on which the entire Report is founded—that of establishing a socially recognised minimum code of employment and social security. On this particular issue, we feel confident that Sir William is right; and we are glad that the N.C.L., instead of fastening on points of difference, has seen that the right course is to go for the Beveridge Report as an indivisible whole, rather than lend a handle to its enemies who are standing by to attempt all they dare in the way of restricting its scope.

The Last Hundred Thousand

Total unemployment, for the first time since the count began to be taken, stood last month at under 100,000. It may surprise some that it should be even so high at a time when even cripples and aged persons find no difficulty in getting jobs, and when there are thousands of firms all over the country crying out for workers whom they cannot find. The fact, of course, is that, however pressing the demands for labour may be, there will necessarily be some unemployed workers, either idle between jobs for short spells, as in areas where there happens to be for the moment no shortage of labour of that particular sort, or, in certain cases, nearly unemployable, in the sense that they are continually getting sacked even by employers who are acutely short of labour. Something not far short of this 100,000 is probably an absolute minimum, below which unemployment cannot fall even under the most favourable conditions of demand. It is not desirable to compel a worker to move to a quite different part of the country in search of a job merely because he is left idle for a week or so, if it is pretty certain that he will be in another job in his own locality in the very near future. Nor is it practicable, even under new conditions, totally to eliminate all forms of casualness in employment, even though casual labour always involves some wastage of productive capacity. Of the 95,000 on the register when last month's count was taken, over 26,000 were women; and probably most of these were of pretty immobile type. Another 10,000 were girls, and yet another 10,000 boys; and most of them were probably just on the point of getting jobs after leaving school. Sir William Beveridge, though he postulates "full employment" as the necessary basis of post-war policy, has based his estimates on a margin of 10 per cent. unemployment in the trades at present insured, or 8½ per cent. over the whole employed population. Surely we ought to do better than that? If we can reduce wartime unemployment to a tiny fraction of 1 per cent., we ought to aim at something not above 5 per cent. as the peacetime maximum.

Coal Output

Most of the Scottish coalfields, South Wales, and the two fields in Yorkshire are still well behind their target output in November; but in most other areas output was in excess of the minimum necessary for earning the bonus. The excess, however, was not large; and it is plain that the mild weather of recent weeks has been of great advantage in keeping consumption down. If the weather turns cold, and we have a hard winter after Christmas, the situation may still become serious. Yet reorganisation does not appear to be advancing very fast. The new National Coal Board, representing the various sections of the industry *plus* a few "consumers," held its first meeting last week; and the Regional Coal Controllers are supposed to be at work concentrating production on the most economical seams, rationalising methods of distribution, and generally tightening up the organisation where they can. There is, however, an impression abroad that this activity does not mean very much except on paper, and that the industry is still being allowed to have matters pretty much its own way. The only pit so far taken over by the Government is one which had been for some time in the hands of a receiver, and could therefore be requisitioned without antagonising any powerful vested interest. Measures of reorganisation could hardly be expected to produce much immediate effect on output. But are there, in fact, any measures which can be relied on to have their due effect after a sufficient time has elapsed? If there are, no one in the trade appears to know much about them. Nor has anything yet been done to put the bonus plan on a more sensible basis by making the bonus payable to individual pits which produce more, instead of allowing it to depend on average output over areas too big for the stimulus to exert much influence on the ordinary men. Pit committees do appear to be increasingly widespread and active; and no doubt their members are doing what they can. But the state of suspicion among the miners remains; and there is still no feeling among them that they are being called upon to work for the public rather than for the colliery owners. This is largely a legacy from the ill-feeling which has permeated the industry for a generation past. Coal Board or no Coal Board, it is more than doubtful whether the two parties can be induced to forget their animosities and pull together for as long as the emergency lasts. Things might be different if the State were effectively to take over the mines; but the vested interests are apparently still too well entrenched for such a solution to be regarded as "practical politics."

The Catering Trade and the Tories

Mr. Bevin still unrepentantly asserts his determination to introduce in the New Year his Bill for regulating labour conditions in the catering trades; and a clear majority of the Conservative Party, egged on by the trade interests, continues to affirm its intention of fighting the Bill tooth and nail, on the ground that it infringes the principle that controversial legislation, except when it is directly necessary to the war effort, should not be introduced in time of war. It is in truth difficult for Mr. Bevin to argue that his Bill is exclusively directed to the needs of war. But it seems pertinent to observe that those who oppose the Bill on the ground mentioned would presumably oppose even more hotly any proposal for regulation of labour conditions over a wider field. Such objections have, of course, nothing to say against the holding down of wages by such bodies as the National Arbitration Tribunal. That they regard as fully legitimate wartime policy; whereas any attempt to legislate for permanent improvements in labour conditions is denounced as a breach of the party truce, or understanding, or whatever it is supposed to be called. If this attitude is persisted in by a majority of the Tories, what becomes of reconstruction policy in general, and of the undoubted necessity of passing into law well ahead of the end of hostilities any measures which we wish to see in proper operation in time for them to be of help in facing post-war difficulties? Post-war planning cannot possibly be kept as a non-controversial issue. If the Government were to give way to the clamour, in and out of the House of Commons, against any measures that anyone may choose to regard as contravening the principle of "national unity," the agencies which are supposed to be planning for reconstruction may just as well pack up at once. Where is the sense of hoping for an industrial policy that will please everybody? There is no such policy; but there is a plain need to settle the basis of reconstruction now.

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SOCIAL SECURITY, WAGES AND EMPLOYMENT

WOULD the Beveridge Report, if it were accepted fully and put comprehensively into effect, slay "Giant Want"—to make use of Sir William Beveridge's own phrase? The answer plainly is that, by itself, it would not, although it would go a long way in the right direction. In the main, the "want" with which Sir William is concerned is that which arises when, for any of a variety of reasons, the breadwinner's normal capacity to provide for the needs of his household is interrupted or destroyed, as it is when he falls out of work or ill, when he is disabled by accident or industrial disease, when he gets too old to earn, or when he dies leaving dependents who are not in a position to provide adequately for themselves. Against all these contingencies Sir William has done his best to make provision; and, if we include National Assistance, which remains subject to a Means Test, he has actually served them all. What he has not done, except inferentially, is to deal with the position of the man or woman who is not able to command a wage or other income on which a decent standard of life can be sustained.

True, Sir William's proposals do make a substantial contribution towards relieving the difficulties of many of those who are in this unhappy plight. The payment of children's allowances, which he postulates though he does not work out a detailed scheme, will lessen the burdens falling on the earnings of a large proportion of the poorest households. Low wages, or the exiguous receipts of many small shopkeepers and other workers "on their own account," will matter much less, it can be argued, if the burden of maintaining more dependent children than one no longer falls upon them. But there will remain cases, quite numerous cases, in which there will be no relief from this source, because the poverty is not a consequence of having children to support. There will be elderly workers or small shopkeepers who are well below pensionable age, but have lost the ability—if they ever had it—to ensure a satisfactory living income. There will be comparatively young people who have never learnt a real trade, and have been bunted about all their lives from one unskilled and ill-paid occupation to another, always existing below the poverty line, and speedily acquiring some physical or mental hardship to prevent them from improving their situation.

No one who has studied the pre-war composition of the occupied population in large towns—and above all in parts of London and in such seaports as Liverpool, Glasgow and Cardiff—can be unaware of the existence of this submerged section of the marginally employable, which is not, by the way, by any means confined to the "coloured people" about whom a contributor to the NEW STATESMAN wrote so feelingly last week. What will happen to such people under the Beveridge Report? When they fall sick or out of work they will get the same subsistence income as anyone else; and in quite a number of cases it will be a higher income than they are able to earn with any regularity when they are well and, from the standpoint of the Labour Exchange, in recognised employment. It may be argued that this change in their status will of itself so increase their bargaining power as to enable them to exact higher wages; and in a certain number of instances this will no doubt be true. This, however, will not help those who live, not by wages, but as workers on their own account; and it is doubtful whether it will help a good many of those who do normally live by earning a wage—of sorts. For the plain truth is that many of these persons have, in effect, no bargaining power. They are unorganised, and practically unorganisable; and they take what they are given with a fatalism based on lifelong experience of being buffeted about.

Sir William Beveridge says, at the very beginning of his Report, that one of the principles on which it rests is that of an assumed National Minimum in all the contingencies of living. It would be indeed a topsy-turvy result if the acceptance of the Beveridge Plan were to leave as the one uncovered contingency that of being actually in employment. It was not, of course, his business to deal with this part of the problem; for wages or other earnings form no part of the "social insurance and allied services." He does, clearly contemplate that the State will have to take steps to stop this hole which will otherwise be left in the system of Social Security, by the enactment of some form of minimum wage legislation on an inclusive basis. The Trade Boards Acts apply only to a limited range of specified occupation—mainly those in which women are largely employed; and the few other minimum wage laws at present on the statute book are also measures applying to particular trades. There is no general minimum wage, at less than which it is unlawful to employ anyone, in any occupation; nor is there any instrument for covering those who work in trades too scattered or ill-defined to be placed under regulation by a Trade Board. But some sort of General Minimum Wage Act is now clearly necessary, as a complement to the Beveridge Plan. It may be desirable to cover a good many additional trades by bringing them under Trade Boards or by specific legislation, such as Mr. Bevin is at present very sensibly endeavouring to apply to the catering trades. But, even if this is done, there will remain a large residue of miscellaneous occupations, which will need to be covered by the setting up of some sort of Minimum Wage Commission, empowered to prescribe rates and conditions for any body of workers not protected by other means.

This is not the whole of the answer to the problem; for, as we have seen, many of the worst cases of poverty arise not among wage-earners, but among small shopkeepers or workers on their own account. These present a much more intractable difficulty; for there is plainly no way of legislating for the assurance to such persons of adequate earned incomes, and no way of meeting their difficulties that does not involve recourse to some sort of assistance tribunal operating a test of means. Sir William's revised National Assistance organisation will have to remain responsible for meeting their needs, to the extent to which they continue in existence as a class after the war. How far they will continue is a moot point. Very large numbers of very small shopkeepers have already been put out of business by war conditions; and a large proportion of the workers "on own account" have been drawn into the factories now that most employers have to regard any labour they are allowed to retain as better than none. For the period of the war this transfer to factory work has solved the greater part of the problem; but evidently they are just the persons who will be discharged first from the factories as other labour becomes available. What are they to do then? They will not find it easy to get back into shopkeeping, in face of the effects of wartime concentration; and it is doubtful whether there will be many openings that will allow them to resume working on their own account.

Sir William Beveridge's Plan includes a Training Benefit which will be open to persons of these categories. But how many of them will be regarded as suitable for training, or at all events will be accepted for employment when they have been trained, unless employers fundamentally revise their ideas of eligibility? The governing factor in this connection is, of course, the steadily increasing average age of the population, which has the effect of reducing the number available for employment in the age-groups from which factory managers prefer to recruit their labour force, and of increasing the numbers of persons looking for employment who cannot readily adapt themselves to the pace of production customary in modern highly mechanised establishments. The factory employer, faced with such a situation, instinctively reacts by increasing the degree of mechanisation, so as to use fewer workers rather than by adapting his factory technique to the employment of other workers. Left to his own devices, he will probably do his best as soon as the war is over to revert to methods which require young workers capable of standing the strain.

This, unless we do something about it, will be a powerful force making for the return of mass unemployment after the war. A basic need, if we are to improve our standard of living, is the adaptation of our factory methods to the types of labour available, as well as of the available labour to the demands of the machine. It is very possible that the resort to part-time labour, will be a highly necessary form of adaptation of the post-war factory system to the changing age-structure of the people. But this adaptation is unlikely to be made save under pressure.

This, however, raises the question, How does this demand that industry shall adjust itself to the use of different types of labour fit in with the requirement that it shall pay to all those it employs a minimum wage recognised as sufficient to ensure a tolerable living standard? It will not fit in at all, unless the State creates conditions which will enable the employer to employ the older workers remuneratively at the approved wage. This is partly a matter of ensuring an adequately high all-round level of consumers' demand—and to these both the proposed Minimum Wage Act and the Beveridge Social Security Code will make a substantial contribution. But the effect of a high level of consumers' demand may be to induce employers in many of the consumers' trades to push mechanisation to an uneconomic point because of their want of faith in the practicability of making the older workers productive enough to be worth the wage they will have to get if they are employed at all. Such a policy would be self-defeating; for in the end the major part of the Social Security income distributable under the Beveridge Plan is bound to come out of the productivity of those who are employed, and even a high level of productivity per head cannot make up, in times of total productivity for a large volume of labour left unused.

If may, therefore, be necessary to impose conditions in industry, not only in respect of the wages and conditions it is to observe but also in respect of the types of workers which it is to be allowed to engage. It may have to be made compulsory for most industries to have a minimum proportion of older people in their labour force, and the progressive industries may have to be prevented from absorbing more than their fair share of the dwindling supply of juveniles and young adults. Naturally, the adjustment of the demand for labour of different kinds to the available supply could be made much more easily if industries were directly under the control of the State, which would then obviously need to adjust the demand to the supply, as the Ministry of Labour is actually doing at present, under the acute pressure of war needs. But, even if we are to carry on after the war largely under a system of private enterprise, the need to do something of this sort will be unavoidable.

As for those who say that all such projects are against the laws of political economy, and that in any event we shall be too poor after the war to afford the Beveridge Plan—they are talking nonsense. The astonishing thing about the Beveridge Plan is its cheapness, which is chiefly due to the fact that it is mainly an instrument for redistributing working-class incomes, rather than for making the rich pay for helping the poor. There is no question of our being unable to afford the Beveridge Plan, provided only that the aggregate of *working-class* incomes is kept sufficiently high. To keep it so is mainly a matter of keeping in regular employment everyone who can make a significant contribution to total output, even when that involves revising our notions of employability and of factory technique. Social security in effect pays for itself, on condition that total employment is kept at a high level. That is the essential point to keep in mind, and with it the certainty that full employment will not prevail if monopolists are allowed to set profit-mongering high and to reject as unemployable, a large fraction of the total post-war supply of workers.

ISOLATION AND EXPANSION

[This is the second of Mr. Kingsley Martin's articles on the United States. The first of the series appeared on December 12th.]

THE isolationist issue has not yet been settled in the United States. Americans have not entered this war with the idealism of 1916, nor have they decided, on the basis of experience, to condemn the withdrawal of 1919 as an impractical attempt to evade the indivisibility of war and peace in the twentieth century. The "great argument" between isolationists and interventionists was never completed; it was cut short by Japan. The United States is in this war, not because a majority of Americans love or hate any of the belligerents or have reached agreement that any of the principles at stake or of the interests involved are worth Americans fighting for. On these matters they are still divided. They entered the war a year ago because of Pearl Harbour; without that incident it is doubtful whether they would yet be in the war. I say this with no suggestion of praise or of censure; it is simply a very important fact that American and British publicity may disguise, but which we in Europe fail to recognise at our peril. For the battle between isolationists and interventionists has never for a moment slackened in America; the stakes are the control of the war machine now and of the peace-making later. In the immediate post-war period America will almost inevitably be the most powerful nation, at least in the material sense. Therefore the decision of this battle within America will be one of the most important decisions in history. It will shape the fate of nations as the similar decision did in 1919. The argument continues, though the phrases and slogans have changed to meet war requirements; the accumulated experience of three years of war will find expression in the Presidential Election of 1944.

I have heard innumerable discussions on this subject in America; some of the most interesting were with soldiers—officers, privates and N.C.O.s A common answer to a question about what future the troops think they are fighting for is: "They think the job has got to be done as quickly as possible and they will want to come home again as soon as possible after it's over." If I was dissatisfied with that, some young officer, who had been thinking things over, would say: "I reckon Britain can't run things by herself any more: America and Britain will have to police the world together." (The view that the trouble all comes from British failure became widespread after Singapore; inaccurate comparisons between the British in Malay and Burma and the Americans in the Philippines are common.) And here, if I pushed on the argument, I met two opposite tendencies.

With some who talked of American and British co-operation, the inclusion of Britain was a matter of courtesy rather than realism; they thought America could run the whole show alone. A recent public opinion poll in the United States showed that something like a third of the American people thought the U.S.A. could win the war alone even if Britain and Russia and China were all defeated. America and Britain as the world's policemen meant, in these minds, America with helpful satellites, Canada, Australia, South Africa and Britain. But there was another view which found expression at such discussions. America and Britain were not enough: we were fighting a United Nations war; to stress the two modern democracies alone looked like a new balance of power and the danger of war with the Soviet Union before long. In some form we must have some new type of League of Nations, this time "with teeth in it," principally perhaps American teeth, but teeth. Again, I check up my notes of such conversations with the records of Gallup and Fortune polls; a large majority of the public now votes in favour of some form of international organisation. The specifically isolationist vote is no more than 15 per cent. at highest. But the vote for a world organisation is so vague that it might cover anything from a military alliance of victorious nations to an Anglo-American effort to dominate the world or an all-embracing World State with an international air force to prevent aggression. The internationalist vote in the Gallup poll is an indication of good-will, not an acceptance of responsibilities. The implications of world co-operation and the internal economic adjustments involved have not been even remotely envisaged.

Several officers with whom I talked were candid about their post-war perplexities. One thoughtful lieutenant remarked that a purely nationalist settlement with Russia strengthening her frontier zone in isolation on one side and America and Britain settling things their way on the other—that, he said, would be "a new and dangerous form of the balance of power"; it would mean another war before long. A colonel on the same occasion remarked, in a loud voice obviously intended to scotch any anti-Soviet feeling, that when the war was won, the strength and courage of the Russian people would be seen to be the most important single factor. A young captain, however, remarked afterwards that he thought it would be a good thing that at the peace-making America would probably have reached her maximum strength in men and materials. "It sounds an awkward thing to say about your ally," he added, "but it is just as well that we shall be strong at the peace, so that Stalin won't try to spread his ideas or settle the world to suit himself."

I quote these conversations not because they illustrate any peculiarly army state of mind, but because, on the contrary, the army, which is recruited from all classes and parts of America, is highly representative of younger opinion in the United States. There are, of course, some who hope to cash in on the army. In September and October the New York *Daily News* and the *Times-Herald* of Washington, both papers belonging to the Patterson-McCormick group, were running a campaign for an army dictatorship after the war. General MacArthur's announcement that he would never himself play a part in politics proved no deterrent. They argued that the boys in uniform would have the power and could take the right to do as they liked when they got home. If they got together and claimed their reward for saving the country, this, said the *Times-Herald*, would not be Fascism, but "American democracy working out in practice."

Such an appeal to army sentiment on the part of papers with many readers in the forces may perhaps be dismissed as a mere circulation stunt, but the campaign for a ten or thirteen million army that goes on in Washington and the constant struggle between army and civilian control of supplies cannot be easily dismissed. I know nothing of General Somervell's politics; maybe he is as innocent of political bias as General Eisenhower is said to be. But he is regarded by everyone as one of the most influential figures in the United States, and the speech in which Mr. Stimson referred to a 7½ million army was generally taken as being the President's personal reply to some of General Somervell's friends who talked in terms of an army of thirteen millions. These generals see before them a unique opportunity to build a vast, indeed a perfect, war-machine. If these perfectionists had their way, their critics declare, most of America would be in uniform. There would be just the correct number of aeroplanes and tanks and guns to every brigade. But most of the men needed for growing food would have been called up; there would be shortage of everything needed to supply the army, and as for using it—there would never be enough shipping to transport such an army and to maintain the supplies it would need on another continent. Mr. Willkie was attacking no bogey when he talked of the heads of the Services getting out of control in Washington and complained that lend-lease promises to America's allies were being held up by the Washington perfectionists. The army of General Somervell's dreams could not in any case be ready for several years; it cannot fight in the war in which we in Europe are engaged. What would be its purpose? To cope, perhaps, with a Bolshevik danger which haunts the minds of American no less than British Blimps? The more one examines this Big Army school the more it looks like a new and definitely Fascist form of isolationism.

The Lindberghs and Fords and the openly pro-Axis groups have gone to ground, perhaps for the duration. But one need not look far to find isolationism. The men who run the Republican party have modified their tactics, not their outlook, since Pearl Harbour. "Non-intervention" has lost out, but all the essentials of isolation can still be seen in articles that urge concentration against the Japs, whom alone America should be fighting, that exaggerate every charge of administrative inefficiency into an indictment of the President and the New Deal; and that argue that all America's troubles come from the infamous policy of interfering with Big Business and wasting America's resources on lend-lease to the British and the Bolsheviks. Those who use such language made considerable headway in the November elections—enough headway, at least, to embarrass the President in both Houses of Congress. How far these anti-Roosevelt forces are willing to go the world learnt when the *Chicago Tribune* printed the Government's war plans against the Japanese; even the fact that they were admittedly stolen from Washington did not trouble the paper or give the Federal Government a legal remedy. There is no point at which such people will stick; one may meet this type of unreasoning and malevolent opposition among private people in Washington, or indeed anywhere else. It is by no means confined to the area fed by Colonel McCormick. It exists wherever propertied interests have been damaged by the New Deal. I have tried on occasion to persuade such embittered enemies of the President that he has been in fact their best friend: it was Mr. Roosevelt who, for better or worse, saved American Capitalism in 1932. But those who yearn for a lost paradise when Labour was unorganised and unprotected, when profits behind tariff walls were unlimited and the prospects of Hooverism were still unblighted by the reality of fourteen million unemployed—such survivals and beneficiaries of American monopoly capitalism are not to be moved by reason. I recall one energetic and violent woman whose dislike against President Roosevelt and against all labour organisations was so violent that I set out to find its cause. Most of it proved to be just the talk of a rich group; in her case her father had lost some shares. In comparison with that calamity, the history of the rest of the 132 million Americans and the facts of the war had made on her no lasting impression.

If one adds up these isolationist and pro-Fascist forces, if one notices from coast to coast the way in which people complain of the red tape and inefficiency and interference of "Washington"—sometimes the November elections were presented to me in the light of Washington versus the Rest—if one recalls that one powerfully organised Labour group under John Lewis is isolationist and, in the guess of some better qualified than I to hold an opinion, potentially National-Socialist; if one adds the fear of negro emancipation and the confusion and resentment inevitable in the early stages of turning a capitalist democracy into a nation at war—taking all these facts into account, it seems that the chances of reaction, and especially of isolationist reaction, are still strong. I know Americans, experienced observers, who assume that from now onwards the Republicans will gather support until in 1944 they sweep the board and return to a policy of high tariffs and no lend-lease, of bitter repression towards Labour and of Red-baiting—a repetition of 1919, only on a far bigger and more consciously Fascist scale.

It would need a bigger fool than I to prophesy what will happen in 1944: professionals who spend their lives watching and measuring American trends are to-day completely at a loss. All I can do is to register a doubt about America's return to isolation. I do not think it certain that the victory will go to the Republicans and I am

doubtful whether the Republicanism that wins, if it does win, will be isolationist in the familiar sense of the word. I believe that the opposition to isolation is more powerful than ever before and that the current of the Republican party, in spite of the election of Ham Fish and Senator Brook, runs rather towards some form of internationalism. Wendell Willkie consciously makes it his mission to swing the Republican party from isolationism, and the response to Mr. Willkie's present liberalism is incalculably great. Nor is Mr. Willkie alone. Other able Republican leaders—Henry Luce, for example—repudiate a narrow future for the United States. Why should not the twentieth century be "America's Century" even more than the nineteenth was Britain's?

Let me examine this new trend. As I see it, America is bound to develop an expansionist outlook within the next generation, whether it follows immediately after this war or after another futile effort at isolation. Henry Luce, born in China, the son of a missionary, is a pioneer of a new Imperialism. He has imagination as well as business acumen; he has the dual approach without which no new policy is ever likely to appeal to the United States. No one could talk to Luce about China without seeing that he cares about it, and that his concern is not a narrow business interest. Of course he has business interests there, and looks forward to the expansion of American business in Asia. It is important that the comparison sometimes made with Lord Beaverbook omits, among other essentials, that Luce consults a group of able younger men and listens to their advice. He does not dictate. While he talks of expansion the American Century blossoms before their eyes as a splendid, if profitable, adventure. In a word, Henry Luce stands, it seems to me, in the same relation to American capitalism as Cecil Rhodes stood to British. When British home markets were full, the Little Englandism of Bright changed to that self-deluding belief in the White Man's Burden that swept over Britain in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, which animated Cecil Rhodes and reached its climax in the Boer War. Professor G. M. Trevelyan has pointed out that the same men and women who elected Bright as their Member of Parliament in Birmingham before the Crimean War were voting for Joseph Chamberlain and Imperialist expansion a generation later. I am not, therefore, impressed by the argument which I still heard in the United States that America will never go imperialist because it is outside the nature of her individualist tradition.

As I see it, America will in any case be strong after the war and far more inclined than before to use her strength. Her soldiers fighting in many parts of the world may be recalled, but the new air services, which America has developed to take the place of the German and Italian companies in South America, will not, I fear, be internationalised; nor do I expect American air companies readily to share out in Africa or the Pacific. It seems to me unlikely that America will repeat her performance after the last war and scrap the vast merchant fleet she is now creating. Therefore the isolationist who emphasises the strength of America and her power to make a decisive entry into any conflict in any part of the world will find himself, often unconsciously, transformed into an imperialist. If I am right about this, the chances of America being purely isolationist as in 1919 is small. Her expansion in some form, particularly in the Far East, would seem almost inevitable. In that case the real question is not one of isolationism versus intervention, but rather of the form the intervention will take. Will it be the imperialist crusade outlined by Mr. Henry Luce in the American Century? Will it involve a conscious effort to supplant British power? Will it be for co-operation with British imperialism against the competition of other Powers and other ideas? Will it be internationalist on the lines preached by Wendell Willkie, or will it take the humanitarian "common man" turn envisaged by Henry Wallace? I will say something about these issues in another article.

KINGSLEY MARTIN.

A LONDON DIARY

WHAT a joy to hear the German wireless explaining that Montgomery has only succeeded in lengthening his line of communications! We cheerfully waive the copyright in that sort of thing, and Dr. Goebbels is free to use all our clichés, communiqués and military expert opinion from Dunkirk to Burma.

* * *

Mr. Arthur Greenwood, who has never thought in purely nationalist terms, would have done well to refuse the invitation to the "Fight for Freedom" Conference last Friday. This movement is apparently much under the influence of a certain Mr. Walter Loeb, who is, I understand, a German who left the Third Reich early enough to avoid Hitler's Jewish persecutions. It has drawn into its net a number of misguided people who claim Lord Vansittart as their patron. I am a little sorry for Vansittart. He would not, I am sure, willingly associate himself with many of the views expressed by Mr. Loeb. Arthur Greenwood discussed the extremely difficult problems connected with disarming Germany after the war, and Lord Vansittart's message to the gathering was confined to stating that German militarism must be defeated and abolished, and that Germany must be disarmed and re-educated under the protection of occupying Powers. Just what Mr. Loeb wants more than this I am not sure, but his speech, which included a venomous attack on anti-Nazi refugees, shocked his more moderate and thoughtful listeners. Mr. Dobbs made a sensible speech which could have been made by any honourable member of the Labour Party. It was noticeable that people like John Parker, whose own contribution was to discuss the minorities problem and the possibility of exchanging populations and of allowing East Prussia to go to Poland if Russia demand Eastern Poland, left early, in company with Mr. Hauck (of the Fighting French) and Count Karolyi, who, like a number of the other guests were present not as disciples but because they were invited.

* * *

One gets some glimpse of the irrelevant folly of this anti-German-people campaign when one realises, on the evidence of the Polish Government's official reports, that the people actually engaged in murdering the Jews in Eastern Europe are a special corps of Lithuanians, Latvians and Russian Whites. What we are up against is a revolt against civilisation which has found some of its most pernicious leaders in Germany and its followers and henchmen in many countries. Some of them are busy raising anti-civilisation cries even in this country during the war, and they will try to revive their organisations at the end of it. If the thesis that all our troubles come from the Germans were true, how easy it would be! How simple would be the remedy! We should merely do to the Germans what the Germans are now doing to the Jews, and then there would never be wars any more, and we could all live happily ever after.

* * *

A little knowledge of history saves one from these follies. In 1917 British Big Business was talking just as Mr. Loeb and his friends are talking to-day, and it was the newspapers, which were the keenest Hun-baiters, which were soonest advertising holidays in Germany and trying to explain how fine Nazi discipline was and working a few years later to push us into a war against the Bolsheviks. It may seem to-day that this story cannot be repeated. The Salute to Stalingrad last Sunday night was flamboyant enough to satisfy anyone, and I hope that Stalin was gratified by the birthday greeting with which the Monday morning news bulletin began. Satisfied? I think I see his smile, for Stalin also knows some history. He knows what certain sections of Big Business in America and Britain really feel about Russia. He knows about the underlying Fascist forces in the Western Democracies, and he remembers always, what we in the West are apt to forget, that the last war ended not in Berlin, but in Archangel. That won't happen this time because of twenty years of Soviet reconstruction and because Russia's fight in this war has raised up new friends for the Soviet Union in every part of the world. But the same forces persist, and Stalin, while bowing gratitude for the bouquets thrown at his feet, will be thinking about the significance of various diplomatic discussions now proceeding about the future of Eastern Europe. I do not see him again allowing a buffer State between Russia and the West—unless it is within the Russian orbit. Those who wish to plan against the outbreak of a third world war should now concentrate on finding a basis upon which the U.S.S.R. can collaborate with America and Britain in the economic and political settlement of post-war Europe. If no such basis is found all the planning in the world will not prevent the victorious nations turning themselves into huge rival blocs, plotting and scheming against each other, with the obvious probability of still greater and better wars in the not very distant future.

* * *

It was well for the House of Commons to stand in eloquent silence when the facts about the Jewish massacres were authoritatively reported. But what, I am asked, will they or can they do about it? I believe some children could be saved if immediate representations were made to Sweden and Turkey. If neutral countries knew that Britain and America would receive these children they could rescue some and pass them on. A really good chance of saving some hundreds seems to have been missed before the German occupation of France. Was the knowledge of the coming occupation the motive for the Home Office refusal to consider a scheme of rescue? That is the most reputable explanation I've heard. What is certain is that one of the arguments used to rebut representations from people as influential and responsible as the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Hinsley and the Moderator of the Church of Scotland was that there is already enough anti-Semitism in England without increasing it by importing more Jewish children. Such an argument is quite unworthy; a wave of hospitality and enthusiasm would have greeted any effort of the Home Secretary to rescue these children. We cannot do with surrender to Fascist blackmail.

* * *

In the Midlands the other day I took part in a Brains Trust arranged by the British Council. It seemed to me really good fun. It was certainly fun for the platform which argued about the British Constitution, the relation of the scientist and the politician, the problem whether there would ever have been a Church of England if Henry VIII had not fallen in love with Anne Boleyn, discussed various views of the Beveridge Report and other controversial matters, and had a thoroughly good time. I should guess that it was about the right mixture of the serious and the rag. The audience wanted serious answers to serious questions, but they also wanted an amusing afternoon. The Brains Trust idea is one of the happiest inventions of this war, just because it manages to serve this dual purpose. The interesting thing on this occasion was that the audience was mainly not British. It seemed to follow all the jokes; it was naturally as interested in problems of historical philosophy as well as post-war reconstruction as any audience one could have found in England. It mainly consisted of Allied troops, who wait their opportunity here month after month. Among its many activities, I doubt whether the British Council does anything more valuable than provide intellectual and cultural interest and a common meeting ground for soldiers and sailors of various nations who, whether they like it or not, can do nothing else but wait and train and hope they will have a country to go back to.

* * *

Apparently Lord Croft and Sir James Grigg do not think that the Beveridge Report is the stuff to give the troops. Anyway, it seems that a carefully written explanation of the Report, produced by A.B.C.A. with a summary by

Beveridge himself, is not considered by War-Office High-ups suitable for Army education. For all I know the manager of the Conservative Party, Sir Kingsley Wood, who made much of his undistinguished reputation by fighting for the insurance companies against Lloyd George before the last war, may have had a finger in this pie. What world such people live in is really a mystery. If Sir James could go and talk frankly to any Army audience in the country he would find that their worst worry is about unemployment.

* * *

America is so much more comfortable than any place there has ever been before in the history of the world that I hesitate to hint that there is anything still lacking for the body's needs. Yet after several experiences of inconvenience, I sympathise with an Englishman I met, who said that he intended to make a great deal of money after this war and then to repay the immense generosity of Americans by a public endowment that would rival Carnegie's. Carnegie, he said, had supplied Britain with public libraries. He intended to endow America with public lavatories.

CRITIC

COME CHRISTMAS

Amid events so unforeseen
The future must remain a blur,
But from the well-informed we glean
The unexpected may occur;
We can but cautiously infer,
Though prophecy should give us pause,
This Christmas, if it comes this year,
Joe Stalin will be Santa Claus.

The diplomatic go-between
May hopes in Habsburg bosoms stir,
The democratic war-machine
May lift the Fascist passenger,
And Europe's would-be arbiter
Bid white with black make common cause,
We only venture to aver
Joe Stalin will be Santa Claus.

Protecting Powers may intervene
To make Rome safe, and after her
Seek measures to preserve Berlin;
And if these open cities were,
They say some circles might demur
And others give restrained applause.
But this is clear, unless we err,
Joe Stalin will be Santa Claus.

The future lurks behind a screen,
One corner of the veil withdraws—
Whatever anything may mean
Joe Stalin will be Santa Claus.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A £5 prize for the first entry in this column goes to Margaret Willis.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Here might I suggest that we would all be better spiritually and physically if doctors were done away with or put to useful work. No one should be allowed to interfere with nature. Wild rabbits do not have doctors, yet they mostly look well and happy.—Letter in *Rotherham Guardian*.

After a very sad, and keenly disappointing, period the path of the Social Crusade is now appearing more clear again

The Leader's conviction that smoking is the supreme social problem of the age is stronger than ever.—*Social Crusader*.

As one who has not read Karl Marx, who has no intention of reading Karl Marx, and who would far rather die than read Karl Marx, it is a little difficult for me to trace the precise nature of his influence on Shaw.—From *Bernard Shaw* by Hesketh Pearson.

THE GOLDFISH

A YOUNG clerk who had been bald for years and who always made a hit as Poo Bah in amateur performances of Gilbert and Sullivan, cycled over with his wife to a country public house one evening in the summer and asked if anyone would sell him a goldfish.

"A goldfish, gentlemen," he said with a killing grimace, "one single ordinary goldfish."

There was no answer.

"That sort of swims around in a bowl," he said, putting down his beer and making swimming movements with his long hands. He had been having terrible trouble with his wife, who stood in the shadow by the door.

"Oh ah ha, that swims in water, ha ha," said the landlady, who had the habit of putting genteel musical noises round her words and of making her hands glide up and down the counter as if she were playing the sounds over to herself.

"The Major there has a pond," said a firewatcher who dealt in poultry. He was standing by the bar with his hands on his money.

There were four labourers sitting on a bench by the window. At the dark end of the bar stood a man in a black and white check suit whose small lizard-like head nearly touched the brown ceiling. It was the little head of a man in a convex distorting mirror. He was gazing at the empty bottles of liqueurs on the top shelf behind the counter and he seemed to be praying to them. Sitting near was a fat, blonde woman in a sun hat and a blue dress. She had large blue eyes which seemed to be wondering at the loss of her beauty. Her waist was beginning to sag over her hip bones like a helpless second chin. Standing near the door was the clerk's wife. She was a thin, dark girl in a white blouse and a grey skirt, with long bare arms and small clenched hands. Her eyes watched everything her husband said and did with that half scornful, half frightened, wondering fixity one gives to the movements of a conjuror.

"Ah," said the clerk. "We make progress. Where's the Major sort of?"

"There he is," said the firewatcher. "Have you any goldfish in your pond, Major?"

"Tops," said the blonde woman. "Someone's talking to you. You must excuse my husband. He has no manners."

"Good evening, madam," said the clerk, bringing his heels together and arching his sandy eyebrows. "Is there any truth, may I ask, in the rumour this gentleman has been spreading, that you possess a pond?"

"We have," said the blonde woman, straightening herself to pull her waist in.

"And is it possible that there are any goldfish sort of? . . ." asked the clerk.

"There are hundreds of goldfish in our pond," said the blonde woman.

"Oh, not hundreds," said the clerk, increasing his charm. "If you have just one single goldfish to dispose of, and you would dispose of it to us, sort of, you would have saved our lives. Isn't that so?"

He turned to his wife. She did not answer. She was still standing in the shadow of the door, now looking with astonishment at her husband.

"Ask Tops," said the blonde woman. "Tops."

"Good evening, Major," said the clerk, springing forward. "Now, where shall I begin?" said the clerk, looking back at the company. He stroked his chin and looked down at his boots. "Yes. Here we are," he said, looking up at the ceiling. "This is it, isn't it?" he said, giving a brilliant look at his wife.

"I understand, Major, that you possess a pond and that there is a possibility that in that pond a goldfish has taken up residence . . ."

"Hundreds, I told you," said the blonde woman, easing her skirt at the waist.

The Major looked down at the clerk.

"Our goldfish is dead," said the clerk, making a wide gesture and standing protectively beside his wife. "In a horrible fashion it died. It was murdered. I murdered it. It came through the blitz. We were bombed out, half the house went—phut! like that, but when we came out of the Anderson there was our little goldfish still swimming round, rather dirty on the dining-room table. We had it ever since we were married. I brought it down here to billets. Then one night I went out into the kitchen for a glass of water, picked up the bowl by mistake in the dark and, sort of, poured the fish down the sink."

The Major was holding a small glass of whisky in his fist and rocking on it as if he were holding the rail of a ship. He gathered his thoughts together slowly.

"You must have been bloody drunk," said the Major, bringing the words down like a hammer on the clerk's bald head.

"Tops!" said the fat woman.

"I say he must have been bloody drunk," said the Major.

"And the children miss it," said the blonde woman quickly to the clerk's wife.

"We have no children," said the clerk's wife. She had not spoken before. Everyone looked at her. She spoke in a small set voice that was shy but certain. "My husband is mistaken," she said. "How can you say you poured it down the sink? He forgot to feed it. I found it dead in the bowl."

The clerk's words stopped in his mouth. His charm went out of his face. It became long and naked-looking, and his round, restless hands stopped in the air guiltily as if he had been caught stealing. The two women glanced at each other with firmness and sympathy. Everyone began to grin at the figure of the clerk. He had left a clip on his trouser leg.

A wide smile forced its way across the face of the Major.

"Naughty boy. What were you doing, naughty boy," said the Major.

"Did the same myself," the Major said. "When she was away. Had a few friends round. Forgot to feed her budgerigars. I didn't half get it in the neck."

He said this boastfully. He had been storing this up to say aloud and in public for many years.

"And God knows you ought to see his friends. Excuse our language," said the blonde lady.

"I say, I didn't half get it in the neck," the Major said, glaring at his wife.

The clerk had recovered.

"Anyway," he said, like an actor who has at last remembered his lines and speaks fast to make up for lost time. "Guilty conscience and all that, so I purchased a pair of velocipedes at great expense, and we're scouring England in search of one small fish. It's not easy, Major," said the clerk, gesticulating. "We've tried London, we've tried the provinces, we're combing the villages and hamlets. You've got a gold mine, Major."

"Eh?" said the Major.

"You try and buy a goldfish. You can't. If you could, they'd be five or ten shillings a piece. What am I saying? That is for the small ones. Fifty shillings would be nothing for a good size goldfish."

"Fifty," said the firewatcher.

"Fifty," said the clerk.

"Bloody marvellous," said the firewatcher.

The wife of the clerk was forgotten. Everyone looked at him. The Major licked his lips and came closer to his wife.

"Go away," she said. "I'm not talking to you. You're a liar. You said you fed them."

"What was the name of that feller," the Major said. "Feller in Gloucestershire, you had lunch with him, had a pond, awful nice feller, died of drink."

"Died of drink," said his wife. "How disgraceful. I'm not talking to you."

"That's it, died of drink. What was his name? Had hundreds of goldfish."

"Find him, Major. Find him quickly," cried the clerk. "Say he had four hundred goldfish, there's six or eight hundred pounds. We shall have to cycle to Gloucestershire."

"I mean to say," said the dealer, taking his hand out of his pocket and tossing himself for

a shilling and putting it back again quickly. "The war's a wonderful thing."

"I'd like to ask you a question," said the Major, moving down upon the clerk. "If there's any goldfish in my pond, how do you propose to catch them? Bloody clever feller who catches a goldfish. I've seen it tried."

"If you have the goldfish, we'll catch them," said the clerk.

"Bloody clever feller who can catch a goldfish," said the Major.

"It's easy," said the clerk, clearing the air around him with a wild gesture of both arms. "Swoosh. Swoosh! Like this! Swoosh!" said the clerk. "With a shrimping net, sort of. Look here, my name is Dickson. May I give you a tinkle on the jolly old phone, one afternoon?"

"No," said the blonde woman. "It's cut off. Fifty pounds a quarter. Tops ringing up his bitch of a sister in Scotland all day and half the village using it without paying. We couldn't stand the racket."

"It does mount up, doesn't it?" said the clerk's wife, anxiously. It was her second speech.

"Well, if we could toddle along, sort of, and have a peep some time on our velocipedes, sort of," said the clerk.

"No damn good," the Major said.

"I say no damn good," said the Major.

"Don't be stupid, Tops," said the fat woman.

"Your ducks ate them," said the Major to the fat woman.

"Oh ah ha, oh dear, the ducks, ah ha," said the landlady, striking an imaginary chord. "Of course ducks will, ah ah."

"All dead," said the Major.

He looked down with satisfaction upon the clerk, a satisfaction which his thick glasses seemed to magnify.

"Dead," said the clerk, throwing up his hands. "Did he say dead?" He turned to the lady. "This is a tragedy."

"It's a lie," said the fat woman. "They're not dead."

"They're dead," said the Major. "Your ducks did it."

"Oh God," said the clerk, covering his face with his hands. "Major, you've lost a fortune."

"Her ducks," muttered the Major. "Four hundred pounds would have come in handy."

"It's a wonder he doesn't say it was the Jews," the fat woman said. "It was that bitch of a sister of his brought the ducks from Scotland."

A thick breath came down the nostrils of the Major. He seemed to be assembling his forces.

"God, I'm fat," said the fat woman to the people in the bar, easing her skirt again. "And yet I don't eat."

The spell was broken. The Major moved back to his place at the bar and stood again in prayer to the empty bottles on the upper shelf.

"Well," said the clerk, looking nervously at his wife. "Perhaps we'd better resume our life's survey, sort of . . ."

The clerk and his wife left the public house and cycled away

"Phew," said the clerk. The excitement in his face had gone. It was lined, worried and anxious. He looked furtively at his wife.

"What is it?" he said to his wife. She did not answer.

"I dunno," said the clerk. "I do what I can. Try to cheer up. Just as I left the office this evening I said to myself, I expect she'll be in the dumps. I know, I said to myself, I'll do something to cheer her up. See people. See a bit of life. Get back to the happiness we used to have. That's why I bought these bicycles. NO?"

She did not answer.

"And then—it's only a small thing I know—but I thought I'll spring a surprise on her, a goldfish. Like we used to have."

Their bicycles began to race downhill; he came after her, trying to get level with her to see her face. "You don't answer," he called.

The wind was loud in their ears. They had to shout to be heard.

"If you want to give me a surprise, tell the truth to someone, somewhere, and let me hear you," shouted his wife. "Saying you poured it down the sink. You were with *her* that night, that's what I can't forget. That's why it was dead in the morning. That's how I found out."

Her knees went up and down angrily under her rising skirt.

"Thinking of our happiness," she called. "You're only thinking of your act. I never want to see another goldfish as long as I live."

V. S. PRITCHETT

AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

THIS is the most important exhibition held in England since war began. It presents adequately one of the great schools of European painting—the French Impressionists—and gives a taste of its precursors. The Trustees, in a prefatory note, after thanking, as well they may, the lenders, whose courage and generosity deserve the thanks of all, express the hope that "the exhibition will not only give pleasure, but will help to dispel the slight mist of provincialism which may settle on this country in its present isolation." Wiser words these than one has a right to expect in an official document: let us hope that artists, and others, will profit by them.

The pictures are very well shown, and it now seems clear—to me at all events—that Impressionist painting is best seen against a background of unstained wood. Only the lighting, as usual, has to be complained of: can nothing be done about it? The big first room, in particular, is quite unfit to be an exhibition gallery; for a gleam of sun makes the pictures on the north wall invisible, while those on the south remain in a penumbra, broken here and there distressingly by the glare of electric lights. However, the organisers have turned a defect to account by hanging on this wall pictures which do not quite come up to standard. How high that standard is may best be indicated by glancing at the wall and naming a few of the works which fail to pass or to pass with honours, at any rate.

That George Moore should have devoted the profits of *Esther Waters* to the purchase of two Manets is a charming thought; but why did he pitch on these two—Nos. 14 and 80? Perhaps one could guess. That Manet could paint superbly the fragment of *Maximilian* is here to show. He could also be feeble, pretty-pretty and even slightly vulgar. Neither of these pictures is vulgar. The Géricault sketch is not characteristic of that master: indeed, when first I saw it I thought it might be by some English Romantic (say Ward), which only proves my ignorance, forgetfulness, rather, of the drawings at Rouen in which are elaborated the figures here roughly noted. Forain is never to be taken seriously as a painter. But Fantin-Latour's notion of the Venusberg, though slightly ludicrous, is a welcome curiosity: it was much admired by Baudelaire. So was Delacroix's *Le Tasse dans sa prison*, just round the corner, in which the drawing of the figures is, one must admit, unusually sure. But, to return to the wall of dishonour, or, to come nearer the mark, the second-class compartment, here are two more Delacroix, neither of which—though the lady is preferable to the lion—is at ease in such fine company; and here, I am glad to say, has been stowed *The Kiss* by Daumier. Had this touching little incident been rendered by Millet how the groups which I watched adoring would have scoffed at its odious sentimentality—without noticing, I surmise, how much better it would have been painted. Daumier made some good drawings—one of them is here, No. 26—and painted a few fairly good pictures; but that this able rhetorician should still be reckoned amongst the very great is one of those things I shall never understand. And, talking of mysteries, I had better here mention, since it hangs in this room, the fine, tall canvas *Portrait of a Nubian*, acquired by the gallery on its merits as an anonymous painting and now attributed to Géricault. The greatest mystery of all is—why it was ever attributed to Sir Joshua.

Apart from the few inferior works in Room XXXVI almost everything shown is first-rate. It would be sport to go round with a sympathetic companion and pick the winner. I would quarrel with no one who pulled up in Room XXXIV in front of the wall on which hang three pictures, the middle one of which is Degas' *Repasseuse*. The majestic pose and movement of the figure, the perfection of the placing, the creation of space, the accord of form and colour, the vivacity and certainty of the drawing, the sense given of every drop of significance having been squeezed out of the objects, makes me long more than ever to have back Roger Fry to explain in glowing but precise terms what he felt for this masterpiece which seems to possess most of those qualities which, towards the end of his life, he prized most highly. It makes an attractive Van Gogh hanging on one side of it look trivial; but the Tate Cézanne hanging on the other remains undiminished. What a sermon in stones—in rocks, to be exact—this picture is. (I like to remember that five-and-twenty years ago it was refused as a gift.) The analysis of Appearance is here pushed about as far as analysis will go, and from rocks and road the master has extracted a staggering sum of beauty. And what a good idea it was to hang the portrait of Chocquet opposite *Le Château Noir*, for each picture displays to perfection a special gift. Cézanne's power of analysis and his method of arriving by painting and repainting, by touch and tone, at an expressive loveliness that goes beyond beauty are nowhere perhaps more comprehensibly revealed than in this small much worked on head. That people who knew and loved Rembrandt failed to hail it as a masterpiece is one of the prime oddities of nineteenth-century connoisseurship. Not less clearly in *Le Château Noir* does the master reveal another of his mighty gifts—a visual imagination great enough to create, without any help from outside, design of a positively awful grandeur: lest anyone should misunderstand me, may I add that designs of like grandeur are to be found amongst his Still Lifes?

So, shall we crown Cézanne master of nineteenth-century masters? Can we, when, all the while that we have been moving down the aisle of the inner gallery, from the far end has been smiling on us Renoir's incomparable blonde? Renoir, so the story goes, painted this picture to prove that he could draw in line as well as in colour, in fact that he could draw in the manner of M. Ingres. He could: this picture and others prove it. Also, unlike M. Ingres, as this picture and scores of others show, he could paint like—Rubens is the name that comes at once to mind. Renoir is finely represented: for the rest—for the other recognised masters, I mean—there are two Seurats, and by Corot three pictures, all of which are good and each of which, for some particularity of style or date, is "intriguing." For instance, *Le Village de Marcoussis* was painted in 1867, at a time that is to say when it is popularly supposed that Corot could do nothing right—in landscape, at all events; yet this picture is only a little inferior to the *Beffroi de Douai*, which, of course, is later still.

To be statistical, there are in this exhibition two Courbets (one a masterly study), nine Cézannes, nine Renoirs, three Corots, four Degas, two Van Goghs and three Lautrecs. And the excitement does not end there. It is the glory of French nineteenth-century painting that the so-called minor masters are great artists. But with what show of reason can Pissarro be called minor? And there are eight works by Pissarro. Some may think that neither Monet nor Sisley is seen quite at his best; but both are abundantly represented, and on this showing must be reckoned very fine painters: Boudin (four works) is at least a good one. Rightly, works by Bonnard and Vuillard are included; they hold their own handsomely, in fact Bonnard's fruit piece (75a) is one of the smaller joys of the exhibition. There is but one Gauguin, and that might as well have been omitted. The whole show is to the greater glory of France, and much to the credit of British collectors and officials: to people who care for painting it is a God-send.

CLIVE BELL

HEROD'S STORY

IT was so frosty a night that one's hands
Were coarse with coldness, just like sandpaper;
The sky jittery with stars that wouldn't stay still
With the chattering of my teeth, when O, what a
caper!
Out of a cloud a lone plane droned, and dropped
Its flare of peace and dollop of goodwill
At random. Luckily it didn't go off;
And anyway we had been warned by wise men
To expect it. All traffic was stopped,
And people shepherded, without a cough,
To safety in the fields. Our palace soldiers, then,

Hewed and hacked all night in Bethlehem
To reach the Thing. It was an anxious time
For us who waited, though less for them who wrought,
As the High Priest said, "so wholly innocent of thought
For their own safety, absorbed in duty":
But that, as I replied, was the beauty
Of soldiers. Anyhow, they found the Thing.
Thirty—yes, here it is in the Palace accounts—
Thirty pieces of silver were paid to Joseph,
The plucky fellow on whose house the explosive
Fell. He, in secret, and at breakneck speed,
Drove it—still ticking—down the streets that lead
To the waste land outside the city wall,
And left it there for others to dispose of.

But Lord! so many people came to see
The hole it made that now I charge a fee.

W. R. RODGERS

THE MOVIES

Disney Programme, at Cameo News Theatre
M.O.I. Films
"George Washington Slept Here," at the Odeon

This rather mixed list represents a search on my part. I have been trying—such is the abominable influence of Christmas—to find a funny film, but funny films are rarer this year than turkeys. Now and then I may have heard a gobble and the rare bird has vanished into someone else's suitcase. Miss Dilys Powell found her turkey, for example, in *George Washington Slept Here*, while I'm still looking for mine. The best the market can offer is *The Road to Morocco*, still running after weeks, with its trailer of a camel addressing the audience. "This is the screwiest picture I've ever seen." I've seen many screwier, from *Ben Hur* to *Hellzapoppin*, though Bob Hope dazzles at moments, specially at the beginning. Then there's *Women Aren't Angels* (Drayton and Hare) coming on somewhere for those who can't resist two bald men in the same picture, one of them balder than anyone has ever been before. And in the outskirts this week, Flanagan and Allen are still doing the rounds with *We'll Smile Again*. When, though, I wonder? For they don't get anywhere near it this time. Poor Flanagan, he is given one magic moment, waiting in moth-eaten fur and battered boater by the roadside, and there are some laughs over the me-and-you in a posh hotel, but otherwise this most sympathetic and expressive of comedians is never allowed to come into his own. Why are English funny films, apart from not being funny, so amateur? The jokes! The blue jokes! The brow-beating and conundrums! Hollywood's standard at least is professional and its timing isn't decided by the reaction of the slowest mind in the auditorium.

So I am left with the Disney season at the Cameos, and some odds and ends, including serious films. I have seen and relished again *Alpine Climbers*, in which Goofy, you remember, is thawed back to life by a butler-like St. Bernard, with a brandy keg; the final tableau of the companions leaning together and howling on the mountain-side is once again perfect. Goofy provides more object-lessons in *The Art of Skiing*, not a new film, I believe, but new to me; it is wildly instructional, with a commentary of the Benchley kind, but while Benchley can only teach us how to go to sleep or move into a new flat, Goofy breaks his neck a dozen times on the slopes and lives to take lessons next time in mounting a horse. Goofy is the new favourite of the Disney troupe, and poor old Donald being shaken to bits in a Fun Fair (*A Good Time for a Dime*) stirs sympathy chiefly because of the tortures he has to undergo.

The M.O.I. is wielding a light hand with some propaganda flashes to follow the news-reels. This seems to me a very good idea, and our government advertisers and entertainers are trying out a variety of styles on a number of urgent topics. How to take a bath in five inches of water, the need for filling pig-bins, and potato lure are among the first subjects. It's hard to escape a rueful facetiousness, but the potato film is an amusing parody of old melodramas with father enticed home from the pub to discover that potatoes can be served in 99 (is it?) delicious ways. The M.O.I. are also showing this week the first of a new "Into Battle" series called *Lift Your Head, Comrade*; this demonstrates the work of the Pioneer Corps, and gives some moving glimpses into the histories and present activities of men who have suffered under Nazi persecution. It runs for about twenty minutes, and the Ministry's intention is to produce one film of this kind each month, instead of the much shorter weekly film that has been their programme hitherto.

And *George Washington Slept Here?* Brisk, bouncing, bad-tempered, with a hero (Jack Benny) who makes cracks and falls through ceilings and into wells. Ann Sheridan apologetically looks on. This chapter of accidents invokes every calamity that could afflict a town couple moving into a country house with historical associations and a leaky roof. It's harrowing; it might be funny too, if it weren't so damned businesslike. George Washington slept here, and so did

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Petrified Forest," at the Globe Theatre

Good plays that have made better films seem to be the fashion. *The Little Foxes*, a comparative failure, is followed by *The Petrified Forest*, a comparative success. Why wasn't Mr. Robert Sherwood's play brought to London eight, ten years ago? Our memories of the film, with Bette Davis, Humphrey Bogart and Leslie Howard in the chief parts, had to be allowed to cool, perhaps; but in the meanwhile we have had a whole cycle of gangster films which take the edge off the excitement of *The Petrified Forest*. The perfect setting and timing of such recent films as *The Maltese Falcon* and *The Glass Key* cannot possibly be matched on the stage. For one thing the audience interferes. Mr. Owen Nares steps in from the desert and everyone forgets the situation in order to clap Mr. Nares; and when a joke catches on the moment has to be prolonged until laughter has died away. The sardonic tension, in such circumstances, snaps again and again. But *The Petrified Forest* isn't only a gangster play, and though the atmosphere at the Globe may wear thin at times, this drama of an outpost in Arizona is full of excitement, pathos and humour. Miss Constance Cummings catches the imagination as the girl who serves out hamburgers and reads Villon, Mr. Hartley Power as Duke Mantee achieves a shell-shocked tempo of his own, and if Mr. Owen Nares doesn't look quite the one for long-distance hiking and supreme sacrifices, he gives at least a sympathetic and stimulating performance. The rest of the cast, in a play that gives every actor his moment of self-revelation, do more than averagely well, and to make up for the theatricality of the noises-off there are the bar advertisements and the couple of Ellington records played in Act I.

Civil Defence Artists at Cooling's

The eighth exhibition of the C.D.A. contains the usual jumble of professional, semi-amateur and naive pictures. The last class are well represented in this show by R. M. Dennison's *Food for Thought*, depicting the projection of a coloured film in a church, and by Philip Butler's *God in the Home*. W. E. A. Lockett's *Church*, W. P. Sampson's *Thou Who Changest Not*, and Charles Dunn's *Bombed Out* are also interesting. The most effectively professional works are by Vera Cuningham, Eve Disher and Denis Mathews. The best thing in the show is a Madonna and Child executed by Samson Schames in concrete and mosaic—the materials including fragments of glass and china found among the debris of bombed buildings.

Fishes at the Arcade Gallery

The water-colours and drawings of fish at the Arcade Gallery come from an album belonging to Mrs. Delany, the friend of Swift and Fanny Burney. They are Italian, Dutch and French, mostly of the seventeenth century. Some are studies of still life, others were intended to serve scientific study, like the botanical and ornithological drawings. The oddity of piscine physiognomy lends a vaguely surrealist quality to these works, many of which are beautifully executed.

Correspondence

THE HORROR IN POLAND

SIR,—May I supplement your answer to your question last week, "What can we do?"

You suggest, *inter alia*, an offer by the Allied Governments to receive Jewish children from German-occupied Europe under supervision of a neutral Power. Yes, and possibly adults as well. What is the case for it? The offer would be either refused or accepted. If refused, that would strip Hitler of the excuse that he cannot afford to fill useless mouths and so strengthen the resistance of all decent people in these countries. If accepted, it would not frustrate the economic blockade, because Hitler's alternative is not feeding but extermination. The number involved might be embarrassingly large, but the pace might be regulated and security measures of temporary internment, etc., adopted. So many have perished already. Are the resources of Christendom, including the American States, allied and neutral, inadequate for the remainder? Short of that large proposal, there are the few thousands who escape into neutral but endangered countries.

Whatever the scale of rescue, there should be a concerted plan. Every country of possible reception should be asked to say how many it would receive; what help it would give in money or kind or transport or through guarantees of future reception to the countries of easier first reception. Has the War Cabinet considered all this or asked the United Nations to do so? Have even our own out-of-date rigidly restrictive regulations concerning visas been revised?

The responsibility rests not only on governments but on individual citizens. Every one of us should ask himself, "What can I do to influence the Government, the press, my M.P., my political party, Church, Trade Union or other organisation to make it plain that the Democracy, much as it cares for its own social security, cares even more immediately for the immediate problem of how many of these innocent men, women and children can be rescued from torture and death?"

ELEANOR F. RATHBONE

5, Tufton Court, S.W.1.

SIR,—My indirect authority for the following atrocity story is Mr. Hannen Swaffer's column in the *Daily Herald* of December 16th. Mr. Swaffer asserts that the story was told by the Chief Rabbi at a meeting which he attended on the previous Sunday. To confirm what he heard Mr. Swaffer obtained access to the manuscript of the speech, and from this he quoted the following verbatim extract:

> On July 27th all the Jewish inhabitants of a town near Kiev were ordered to the stadium. The women, of whom there were about 500, were instructed to hold their little children in their arms.
>
> "A few minutes after we had all assembled," an eye-witness declares, "a group of German soldiers in football attire entered the stadium. They snatched the infants from their mothers' arms and used them as footballs, bouncing and kicking them around the arena.
>
> "Soon the ground was drenched with blood and the stadium was filled with anguished cries of women driven insane as they saw their children being murdered before their eyes."

May I, with a full sense of responsibility and of the possible opprobrium involved, say that I do not believe this story, and regard it as a fabrication from beginning to end. If anyone on the strength of this ventures to accuse me of pro-Fascism, or of any complacency in respect of the brutal manifestations of totalitarianism, I engage to flay his intellectual hide for him, however thick it may be.

G. L. SCHWARTZ

[We print this challenge because it seems to us that with the proven facts already so appalling, it is peculiarly necessary not to relate stories based on insufficient evidence. We agree with our correspondent in regarding this story as nonsense.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

DARLANISM

SIR,—On November 16th President Roosevelt allayed some of the apprehensions felt at the elevation to power of the Fascist and traitor Darlan, by stating that :

> I thoroughly understand and approve the feeling in the United States and Great Britain and among all other United Nations that in view of the history of the past two years no permanent arrangement should be made with Admiral Darlan. People in the United Nations likewise would never understand the recognition or reconstituting of the Vichy Government in France or in any French territory. . . .
>
> The present temporary arrangement in North and West Africa is only a temporary expedient, justified solely by the stress of battle.
>
> The present temporary arrangement has accomplished two military objectives : the first was to save American and British lives on the one hand, and French lives on the other. The second was the vital factor of time. The temporary arrangement has made it possible to avoid a mopping-up period in Algiers and Morocco which might have taken a month or two to consummate. . . . Darlan's proclamation assisted in making a mopping-up period unnecessary. The temporary arrangements made with Darlan apply without exception to the current local situation only.

This statement was plainly intended to mean, and was in fact generally understood to mean, that the arrangement with Darlan would lapse in a month or two, so soon as the Germans and Italians had been driven out of N. Africa. Colour was lent to this interpretation by a statement from Washington justifying the Eisenhower-Darlan deal (or should one say, Murphy-Darlan ?) on the ground that it had saved 18,000 American and British lives and put the Allies two months ahead of their schedule. Mr. Cordell Hull seemingly clinched the matter when he announced that the Allies were too busy driving the enemy out of N. Africa to have any time for political problems—for that implied that once N. Africa was free they *would* have time.

Since then Darlan has (*a*) for all practical purposes reconstituted the Vichy Government in North Africa, with himself as its Chief of State, (*b*) for all practical purposes secured Anglo-American recognition, or at least acceptance of, this arrangement, (*c*) announced his intention not only to run N. Africa till the end of the war, but also to help in the freeing of France, (*d*) been indirectly but effectively supported by Mr. Cordell Hull, who not only has not uttered a word of protest against Darlan's claims, which are in flat contradiction to Roosevelt's statement, but has made a speech upbraiding the Fighting French for not rallying to Darlan's Swastika-Tricolour banner.

Meanwhile Darlan is calling up the Moslems of N. Africa. Like Franco before him, he evidently thinks Moors are the best type of soldiers when it comes to "liberating" one's country. As for the officers, they are being recruited from a Fascist para-military youth organisation, *Les Chantiers de la Jeunesse*, started by Vichy and flourishing under Darlan. The *News Chronicle* (December 17th) War Correspondent with the Advanced Force H.Q. in N. Africa gives some interesting details. He writes :

> This French equivalent of the Hitler Youth already provides cadres for officers, non-commissioned officers and specialists for the army now forming.

Their commander, "General" Van Hecke, described as of Flemish extraction, mentioned that in order to flourish under Axis control they had been reared on a diet of anti-British, anti-Soviet and anti-Communist literature, and admitted that they were "a French version of the Hitler Youth," and that "such an organisation has a tendency towards Fascism." But he claimed that their principles were "in deadly opposition to Fascism," because "it is French patriotism, not German patriotism, which is their inspiration."

That is what the Belgian Rexists said of themselves and Mussert and his Dutch Fascists, and the Croix de Feu in France, and Mosley and his little lot here. It has been common form for every Fascist movement in Europe to deny any connection with its masters and models in Germany and Italy.

The interesting fact is that the American and British Governments are training and arming this force of Moors, Senegalese, Zouaves and what-nots, officered by Fascists, that Darlan proposes to let loose on the French people in the wake of the Allied armies and in the name of fighting Germany. When civil war then breaks out between Darlan's Fascist army and the French workers, I hope the rulers of this country and of the U.S.A. will at least not have the consummate hypocrisy to pretend surprise and regret—nor the cynical audacity to support Darlan in the name of law and order, or non-intervention, or whatever excuse seems most plausible at the time.

EX-DIPLOMAT

COLOURED FOLK IN CARDIFF

SIR,—I would like to thank you for the great service you have rendered by the publication of Mr. Little's able and well-balanced article on "The Coloured Folk in Cardiff—A Challenge to Reconstruction."

The League of Coloured Peoples is in full accord with the constructive suggestion he puts forward therein and is actually working on similar lines at the present moment in the city of Liverpool, where the problem is of equal, if not more serious, import. For in this city, in addition to the resident population, whose sufferings are kindred to those of their fellows in Cardiff, there are also about 200 technicians, who have been brought to this country by H.M. Government and are now doing an excellent piece of work in the factories there. This is confirmed by an admirable little publication entitled "West Indian Workers in Britain," which has just come to hand, the publication of which, I think, was inspired by the Ministry of Labour.

We have been pleased that the Bishop of Liverpool and others have shown their consciousness of the need and their awareness of the problem by dealing with the matter in conference and consultation, but, up to the present, we seem unable to convince those most concerned that no useful purpose can be served by dealing with the matter in a niggardly manner. There must be a "Community Hall" of adequate proportions "and buildings suitably and reasonably equipped for the purpose of general social and cultural activities." This can only be ensured by what Mr. Little has described as "the creation of a solid, unified and dynamic spirit of communal responsibility and initiative." It is the creation of this spirit that is so very difficult. We are now in the stage where "the children have come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth." Let us therefore hope that Mr. Little's article will act as the accoucheur to supply what is necessary to help bring into being "Community Halls" both in Cardiff and in Liverpool. This is an essential bit of war service, if we are really fighting against the Herrenvolk idea.

HAROLD A. MOODY,
Founder and President,
The League of Coloured Peoples.
164, Queen's Road, S.E.15.

VINTAGE LONDON

SIR,—A book has recently appeared under my name called *Vintage London* in "The Art Colour Series."

I cannot deny writing the text, but I wish to disclaim all responsibility for the very poor reproductions. Were it not that it is primarily an illustrated book and that I have always tried to associate myself with a high standard of production, I would not be asking you to publish this letter in order that I may try to repair the injury I feel my reputation sustains by the book's appearance.

The series was promoted by the producers, Messrs. Adprint, and their editor approached me to write a text and select illustrations in 1939. When I saw the

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JONATHAN CAPE

proofs, three years ago, of the coloured pictures, I protested strongly and said I did not wish my name to be associated with the book because the colour proofs were so unlike the originals. I then heard no more about the book until six weeks ago, when I learned by chance that it had been published. It contained not only the colour reproductions to which I had objected, but black-and-white reproductions even worse than the coloured ones. I had never seen proofs of the latter. The text (written in 1939), of which I was never shown final proofs, reads as though I had never experienced the London blitz and was unaware that certain of the buildings to which I recommend a visit had been destroyed. I understand that Messrs. Adprint sold the completed book to the publishers. As I was, by this time, doing official work in another country, I was unable to get in touch with the publishers in time to ask them to hold up distribution of the book. But they were good enough to agree not to send out review copies on the strength of my objection to the poor reproductions.

JOHN BETJEMAN

SIR,—Mr. Betjeman has been kind enough to send me a copy of a letter he has written to you about the faults of a picture-book called *Vintage London*.

In order to safeguard the reputations of Mr. Betjeman and other writers concerned with the series of books to which *Vintage London* belongs against entirely unmerited injury, I should be grateful if you would allow me to make clear one fact which Mr. Betjeman has left out, namely, that my name appears on these books as their editor. Any injury arising from the appearance of these books of the kind that Mr. Betjeman fears should properly be borne by me.

CHARLES MITCHELL

SOCIALIST EDUCATION

SIR,—There is an inflexibility about the notions of Mr. Millar and Mr. Woodburn. As a W.E.A. tutorial student in the Drama, American Literature and Political Theory in the hands of socialist, pacifist and anarchist tutors respectively, I fail impossibly to realise the point at which the overalls and white collars of the N.C.L.C. dissolve into the detached intellectual plutocracy of the W.E.A. After all, the answers one gets depend on the questions one asks. The N.C.L.C. ask Marxist questions, and, presumably, get Marxist answers. But that is far from being an expression of the whole truth. Truth, as Oscar Wilde reminded us, is never pure and rarely simple. The tendency to reduce diversity to intensity is a sign of the times, and one that should be seriously deprecated by all interested in the future of adult education.

ERIC S. SANDFORD

(This correspondence must now cease.—ED., *N. S. & N.*)

HOUSES OR FLATS

SIR,—We live in a flat, and what a flat, citizens. Actually the inside isn't so bad. It's cream and bright-looking even if it is rather like a box. But there are some things to bear.

In the first place, the water tank of the people in the flat downstairs is in the loft over our bedroom, and you know what a noise water makes—gurgling and spluttering. If they have a bath late at night it always keeps us awake—and they are clean people and like to bath a lot.

And their baby is teething, too—poor little thing. He cries for two or three hours nearly every night, but we're members of the Royal Society for the Abolition of Birth Control so we bear our lack of sleep over the baby more or less cheerfully.

They are not noisy people usually, but the other Sunday it was awful because they had a row. The man kept saying he was going to go out and commit suicide and we kept running to our front door ready to stop him if he actually did go out, but he didn't go, so it was all right after about 2 a.m.—except for once or twice after they were in bed when the man thought of something he'd forgotten to say during the evening.

The wireless is the thing which really upsets us. Even when they play it quietly we can hear every word. We are members of the Royal Society for the Improvement of the Mind and like to read a lot, but it's very difficult with the wireless going all the time. Not that the radio isn't a great invention in its way.

We would like to move into a house. We don't really like flats at all, but I daresay we're prejudiced.

P. D.

UNPROMISED ISLAND

SIR,—I am quite willing to answer Professor Namier's questions about the Mauritius internment camp. The provisions for family life are still unsatisfactory, although it is now possible for women to join their husbands in the men's camp between 11 a.m. and 9 p.m. daily. During the first eighteen months husbands and wives met only for three hours a week, and this *al fresco*. Part of the camp (once a prison) is built of stone; the huts are of corrugated iron. There has been a deficiency of vitamin B in the food provided, since it consists almost entirely of tropical vegetables and tinned food. There has been "avitaminosis" among the internees in consequence of this deficiency, but this disease, like the recurrent if mild cases of malaria, is a hardship shared by the ordinary European population of the island. The internees have not been able to accept much private hospitality in Mauritius, and I hope I did not imply that this was the case; the Bishop, however, is one resident who has entertained some of them at his home. Permission for citizens of Allied states to communicate with their consular authorities in South Africa and elsewhere was delayed, as it certainly should not have been, but the more substantial delays in the enlistment of interned volunteers in Allied armies was due to the fact that letters generally take several months to reach this country from Mauritius.

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MAURICE CRANSTON

THE TIED COTTAGE

SIR,—Mr. Dark omits to mention the blessings that a tied cottage can confer. In this part of the country they are close to the farms, so that workers get in for a warm meal and, if necessary, a change of clothes at midday. They waste no time getting to and from their work. The less fortunate occupier of an "untied" cottage may have to cycle several miles to his work and eat an unappetising sandwich lunch in damp clothes. I think many good agricultural workers would say "By all means let us keep the tied cottage with its comfortable advantages, but let there be other houses in the locality to which we can go if we wish to or have to move."

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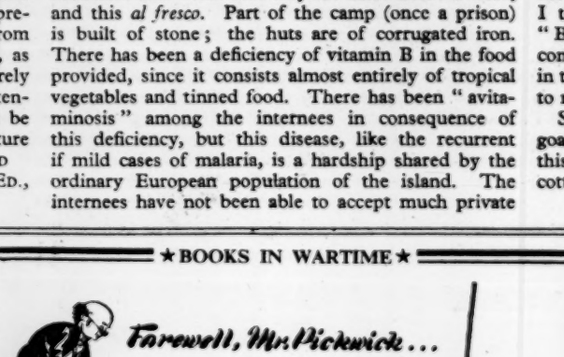

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PHILOSOPHY

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Our poets might be changelings, they have written so much of the fairy folk and their land. So much, that you could compile a great book of it, more, I feel sure, than any other literature contains. But the amount, surprising though it is, is nothing like so surprising as its quality. Great poets have written if not their greatest, some of their most enchanting verse about enchantment.

The *Faerie Queene* first. Spenser, dreaming in the rainy Irish afternoons a dream where memory of the Middle Ages intermingled with the New Learning, filled his long stanzas with knights and witches, ogres and satyrs, nymphs and pilgrims, the Seven Deadly Sins (enjoyably vivid), the Cardinal Virtues (lamentably dim), a great crowd of the people of Mallory and of history and of classical myth. He wove them in detail, swarming yet distinct like the figures in an endless tapestry, held in the smooth texture of his poetry, till the reader's mind, wearied as the eye wearies of tapestry scenes, dazzles and drowses. Yet what a tale! We used to play *Faerie Queene* on Highland walks, in an interminable drama, with the youngest as Una, that silly goose, her role confined to shrieking, fleeing, and being attacked by magicians and false knights. The rest of us assumed any other part at will by the simple process of walking round a birch-tree and announcing "I am Sansloy," or "I am the Monster." We were fully as eclectic as Spenser, and imported any character or adventure we fancied out of other romances; Walter of Deloraine from the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, because he was so much more human than the Red Cross Knight; and Bradamante because Britomart was an indubitable bore, and yet a Knightess Errant was sometimes handy to prove girls could be as brave as boys. As Scottish children, we would none of us act Duessa, fascinating and memorable as she might be, for we knew full well that she represented our lovely maligned Mary Queen of Scots, and was a hideous libel invented by an exile to win a home job by flattering a vanity-demented murderess. For so we judged the woman whom the English, with their queer habit of identifying success with virtue, chose to call Good Queen Bess. So we substituted Sycorax out of the *Tempest* "who with age and envy was grown into a hoop," and so entirely did we believe in our play that if one of us rose out of a heather bush bent and hooky, without even pronouncing the dreadful name, Una would burst into tears of despair. Poor Una! We were horrible to her. She was only six.

Yet the *Faerie Queene* was never written for children. The subtlety of Despair, the carnality of Acrasia reflected Spenser's complex and passionate age:

> Upon a bed of roses she was layd,
> As faint through heat, or dight to pleasant sin
> And was arayd, or rather disarayd
> All in a vele of silk and silver thin,
> That hid no whit her alabaster skin,
> But rather shewd more white, if more might bee:
> More subtile web Arachne cannot spin;
> Nor the fine nets, which oft we woven see
> Of scorced deaw, do not in th' ayre more lightly flee.

How Acrasia resembles Titian's lazy golden Venus! And here, or so I guess, is the clue to the fairies of English poetry. They were not merely folk lore of the Catholic Middle Ages, as Bishop Corbet thought:

> Witness these rings and roundelays
> Of theirs, which yet remain,
> Were footed in Queen Mary's days
> On many a grassy plain.
> But since of late Elizabeth,
> And later, James came in,
> They never danced on any heath
> As when the time hath been.
>
> By which we note the fairies
> Were of the old profession;
> Their songs were Ave Maries,
> Their dances were procession: . . .

He ought to have remembered what the Church said to Joan of Arc about the fairies at her wishing-well. What happened was that romance and fairy-story were still the entertainment of grown people when the Renaissance tardily reached these Northern islands. The parallel with Italy holds, allowing for the poets in Britain taking the place of the painters of the South. There the Christian story kept its place in popular illustration, but humanism weakened its supernatural awe. Simonetta could serve with the same air of plaintive withdrawal for Boticelli's Virgin and his Venus. So with us, though Protestantism barred the Gospels from any poetry save hymns, the fairies, like the Italian gods, were endowed with a glorified humanity. Yet in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* where Oberon and Titania meet in royal rage which instantly reduces the Athenian lovers' quarrels to suburban squabbling, they are human, and magical too. For it is the privilege of poetry to have the best of all worlds at once. Oberon gleams darkly "fell and wrath" with all the power of sorcery, we know his anger has blighted the crops and

> every pelting river made so proud
> That they have overborne their continents.

We know the little western flower will make Titania full of hateful fantasies. And Puck, too, is no dragon-fly elf, but the real, mischief-making spirit of the country people, Robin Goodfellow, Lob-Lie-by-the-Fire, the rural Pan come down the centuries to tie proud Titania spell-bound to Bottom the ass. It is this splendour of the Fairy King and Queen and the bumpkin fun of the mummers which make Mendelssohn's busy fizzy music so madly inappropriate. Not that the elves and fairies are not there, of course, with their songs and little size, Peasblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustard-seed. But they are only decoration. No one knew more about the Little People than Shakespeare. Think of Queen Mab in *Romeo and Juliet*, and of Ariel changing his shape and size at will:

> In a cowslip's bell I lie
> There I couch when owls do cry
> On the bat's back I do fly

And it was his knowledge clothed in immortal poetry which endowed the fairy hierarchy with immortality.

Milton, too, wrote of the fairies as full-grown, though his were rather the classic gods with an English difference. *Comus*, you may say, was written for children to act at Ludlow, but *Comus* is no nursery play, though it is a typical fairy story. The themes of these stately Renaissance poems were folklore indeed, recurring in endless variations; the fairy who loves a mortal, the human being lured to fairy-land, the changeling. The Border ballads are full of them — True Thomas who saw a ladye bright

> Come riding down by the Eildon Tree
> Her shirt was of the grass-green silk
> Her mantle of the velvet fyne
> At ilka tett of her horse's mane
> Hang fifty silver bells and nine.

He hailed her as the Queen of Heaven.

> "O no, O no, Thomas," she said,
> "That name does not belong to me
> I am but the queen of fair Elfland
> That am hither come to visit thee."

Then there was Fair Janet, who won her changeling lover Young Tamlane from the train of the Queen:

> Up then spake the Queen of Fairies
> Out o' a bush o' broom
> "She that has borrowed young Tamlane
> Has gotten a stately groom." . . .
>
> "But had I kenned, Tamlane," she says
> "A ladye wad borrowed thee—
> I wad ta'en out thy twa grey e'en
> Put in twa e'en o' tree." . . .
>
> "Had I but had the wit yestreen
> That I hae coft* the day
> I'd paid my kane† seven times to hell
> Ere you'd been won away".

The Romantic Revival was deeply influenced by ballad-poetry; and it is natural enough that Keats returned to the theme of the fairy lover. But *La Belle Dame* and James Hogg's *Kilmeny* were almost the end of the truly adult fairy poems; and the last, written in a musing slow melody, is hard to quote:

> "Kilmeny, Kilmeny, where have you been?"
> Kilmeny looked up with a lovely grace
> But nae smile was seen on Kilmeny's face;
> As still was her look, as still was her e'e
> As the stillness that lay on the emerald lea,
> Or the mist that sleeps on a waveless sea.
> Kilmeny had been she knew not where
> And Kilmeny had seen what she could not declare . . .
> The land of vision it would seem
> And still an everlasting dream.

Tennyson seems to me hardly of the true kin; his romances are too laboriously reconstructed; except for *The Lady of Shallott*, which has the authentic chime. But by then fairy poetry had suffered the fate of fairy-tale, and was made for children only. The tradition lingered, and it was written by serious poets; only from another, dwindled view. Compare the Celtic song of the merman, to his human wife:

> Avore, my heart, the night is dark.
> Wanting fire here, wanting shelter, wanting comfort
> Our baby lies beneath the rock.

With what Matthew Arnold made of it: a family party:

> Children dear, was it yesterday
> (Call once yet) that she went away?
> Once she sate with you and me
> On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
> And the youngest sate on her knee.
> She combed its bright hair, and she tended it well,
> When down swung the sound of a far-off bell . . .

There is nothing left, by the century's end, but the Little Folk. Yeats has a child for his tempting spirit, behind whom the voice sings:

> The wind blows out of the gates of the day
> The wind blows over the lonely of heart
> And the lonely of heart is withered away.
> While the fairies dance in a place apart,
> Shaking their milkwhite feet in a ring,
> Tossing their milkwhite arms in the air . . .

They are unhappy, wicked, creatures, those sung by the moderns; filled with malice against humanity. Perhaps Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* began it. Even De la Mare's fairy "mimble-mambling in the garden" is faintly sinister. There is no gay court of the Queen of Elfland for Charlotte Mew's changeling:

> Why did They bring me here to make me
> Not quite bad, and not quite good?
> Why, unless They're wicked, do They want, in spite, to take me
> Back to their wet, wild, wood?
> And every night, I shall see the windows shining,
> The gold lamp's glow, and the fire's red gleam,
> When the best of us are twining twigs and the rest of us are whining
> In the hollow by the stream.
> Black and chill are Their nights on the wold,
> And They live so long, and They feel no pain
> I shall grow up, but never grow old,
> I shall always, always be very cold,
> I shall never come home again.

That is a far cry from Titania and Oberon disputing over her "lovely boy stolen from an Indian king." The fairies then could be terrible, but they were beautiful and merry, too. Fairies, like gods, it seems, must be believed in to keep their natures; else they pine away to shadows and disappear from their old haunts. They were at their fullest power when they were the poet's darlings, half dream, half joke, blowing into the house with the scent of a flowery wood, dancing in the moonsetting to Oberon's song:

> Through the house give glimmering light
> By the dead and drowsy fire
> Every elf and fairy sprite
> Hop as light as bird from brier.

FREDA WHITE

* coft—bought † kane—tribute

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proofs, three years ago, of the coloured pictures, I protested strongly and said I did not wish my name to be associated with the book because the colour proofs were so unlike the originals. I then heard no more about the book until six weeks ago, when I learned by chance that it had been published. It contained not only the colour reproductions to which I had objected, but black-and-white reproductions even worse than the coloured ones. I had never seen proofs of the latter. The text (written in 1939), of which I was never shown final proofs, reads as though I had never experienced the London blitz and was unaware that certain of the buildings to which I recommend a visit had been destroyed. I understand that Messrs. Adprint sold the completed book to the publishers. As I was, by this time, doing official work in another country, I was unable to get in touch with the publishers in time to ask them to hold up distribution of the book. But they were good enough to agree not to send out review copies on the strength of my objection to the poor reproductions.

JOHN BETJEMAN

SIR,—Mr. Betjeman has been kind enough to send me a copy of a letter he has written to you about the faults of a picture-book called *Vintage London*.

In order to safeguard the reputations of Mr. Betjeman and other writers concerned with the series of books to which *Vintage London* belongs against entirely unmerited injury, I should be grateful if you would allow me to make clear one fact which Mr. Betjeman has left out, namely, that my name appears on these books as their editor. Any injury arising from the appearance of these books of the kind that Mr. Betjeman fears should properly be borne by me.

CHARLES MITCHELL

SOCIALIST EDUCATION

SIR,—There is an inflexibility about the notions of Mr. Millar and Mr. Woodburn. As a W.E.A. tutorial student in the Drama, American Literature and Political Theory in the hands of socialist, pacifist and anarchist tutors respectively, I fail impossibly to realise the point at which the overalls and white collars of the N.C.L.C. dissolve into the detached intellectual plutocracy of the W.E.A. After all, the answers one gets depend on the questions one asks. The N.C.L.C. ask Marxist questions, and, presumably, get Marxist answers. But that is far from being an expression of the whole truth. Truth, as Oscar Wilde reminded us, is never pure and rarely simple. The tendency to reduce diversity to intensity is a sign of the times, and one that should be seriously deprecated by all interested in the future of adult education.

ERIC S. SANDFORD

(This correspondence must now cease.—ED., *N. S. & N.*)

HOUSES OR FLATS

SIR,—We live in a flat, and what a flat, citizens. Actually the inside isn't so bad. It's cream and bright-looking even if it is rather like a box. But there are some things to bear.

In the first place, the water tank of the people in the flat downstairs is in the loft over our bedroom, and you know what a noise water makes—gurgling and spluttering. If they have a bath late at night it always keeps us awake—and they are clean people and like to bath a lot.

And their baby is teething, too—poor little thing. He cries for two or three hours nearly every night, but we're members of the Royal Society for the Abolition of Birth Control so we bear our lack of sleep over the baby more or less cheerfully.

They are not noisy people usually, but the other Sunday it was awful because they had a row. The man kept saying he was going to go out and commit suicide and we kept running to our front door ready to stop him if he actually did go out, but he didn't go, so it was all right after about 2 a.m.—except for once or twice after they were in bed when the man thought of something he'd forgotten to say during the evening.

The wireless is the thing which really upsets us. Even when they play it quietly we can hear every word. We are members of the Royal Society for the Improvement of the Mind and like to read a lot, but it's very difficult with the wireless going all the time. Not that the radio isn't a great invention in its way.

We would like to move into a house. We don't really like flats at all, but I daresay we're prejudiced.

P. D.

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SIR,—I am quite willing to answer Professor Namier's questions about the Mauritius internment camp. The provisions for family life are still unsatisfactory, although it is now possible for women to join their husbands in the men's camp between 11 a.m. and 9 p.m. daily. During the first eighteen months husbands and wives met only for three hours a week, and this *al fresco*. Part of the camp (once a prison) is built of stone; the huts are of corrugated iron. There has been a deficiency of vitamin B in the food provided, since it consists almost entirely of tropical vegetables and tinned food. There has been "avitaminosis" among the internees in consequence of this deficiency, but this disease, like the recurrent if mild cases of malaria, is a hardship shared by the ordinary European population of the island. The internees have not been able to accept much private hospitality in Mauritius, and I hope I did not imply that this was the case; the Bishop, however, is one resident who has entertained some of them at his home. Permission for citizens of Allied states to communicate with their consular authorities in South Africa and elsewhere was delayed, as it certainly should not have been, but the more substantial delays in the enlistment of interned volunteers in Allied armies was due to the fact that letters generally take several months to reach this country from Mauritius.

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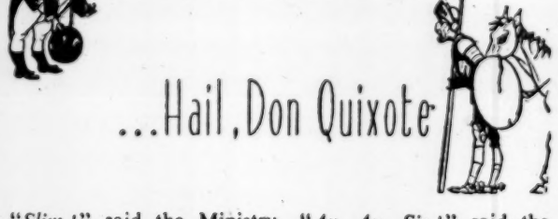

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Our poets might be changelings, they have written so much of the fairy folk and their land. So much, that you could compile a great book of it, more, I feel sure, than any other literature contains. But the amount, surprising though it is, is nothing like so surprising as its quality. Great poets have written if not their greatest, some of their most enchanting verse about enchantment.

The *Faerie Queene* first. Spenser, dreaming in the rainy Irish afternoons a dream where memory of the Middle Ages intermingled with the New Learning, filled his long stanzas with knights and witches, ogres and satyrs, nymphs and pilgrims, the Seven Deadly Sins (enjoyably vivid), the Cardinal Virtues (lamentably dim), a great crowd of the people of Mallory and of history and of classical myth. He wove them in detail, swarming yet distinct like the figures in an endless tapestry, held in the smooth texture of his poetry, till the reader's mind, wearied as the eye wearies of tapestry scenes, dazzles and drowses. Yet what a tale! We used to play *Faerie Queene* on Highland walks, in an interminable drama, with the youngest as Una, that silly goose, her role confined to shrieking, fleeing, and being attacked by magicians and false knights. The rest of us assumed any other part at will by the simple process of walking round a birch-tree and announcing "I am Sansloy," or "I am the Monster." We were fully as eclectic as Spenser, and imported any character or adventure we fancied out of other romances; Walter of Deloraine from the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, because he was so much more human than the Red Cross Knight; and Bradamante because Britomart was an indubitable bore, and yet a Knightess Errant was sometimes handy to prove girls could be as brave as boys. As Scottish children, we would none of us act Duessa, fascinating and memorable as she might be, for we knew full well that she represented our lovely maligned Mary Queen of Scots, and was a hideous libel invented by an exile to win a home job by flattering a vanity-demented murderess. For so we judged the woman whom the English, with their queer habit of identifying success with virtue, chose to call Good Queen Bess. So we substituted Sycorax out of the *Tempest* "who with age and envy was grown into a hoop," and so entirely did we believe in our play that if one of us rose out of a heather bush bent and hooky, without even pronouncing the dreadful name, Una would burst into tears of despair. Poor Una! We were horrible to her. She was only six.

Yet the *Faerie Queene* was never written for children. The subtlety of Despair, the carnality of Acrasia reflected Spenser's complex and passionate age:

> Upon a bed of roses she was layd,
> As faint through heat, or dight to pleasant sin
> And was arayd, or rather disarayd
> All in a vele of silk and silver thin,
> That hid no whit her alabaster skin,
> But rather shewd more white, if more might bee:
> More subtile web Arachne cannot spin;
> Nor the fine nets, which oft we woven see
> Of scorced deaw, do not in th' ayre more
> lightly flee.

How Acrasia resembles Titian's lazy golden Venus! And here, or so I guess, is the clue to the fairies of English poetry. They were not merely folk lore of the Catholic Middle Ages, as Bishop Corbet thought:

> Witness these rings and roundelays
> Of theirs, which yet remain,
> Were footed in Queen Mary's days
> On many a grassy plain.
> But since of late Elizabeth,
> And later, James came in,
> They never danced on any heath
> As when the time hath been.
>
> By which we note the fairies
> Were of the old profession;
> Their songs were Ave Maries,
> Their dances were procession: . . .

He ought to have remembered what the Church said to Joan of Arc about the fairies at her wishing-well. What happened was that romance and fairy-story were still the entertainment of grown people when the Renaissance tardily reached these Northern islands. The parallel with Italy holds, allowing for the poets in Britain taking the place of the painters of the South. There the Christian story kept its place in popular illustration, but humanism weakened its supernatural awe. Simonetta could serve with the same air of plaintive withdrawal for Boticelli's Virgin and his Venus. So with us, though Protestantism barred the Gospels from any poetry save hymns, the fairies, like the Italian gods, were endowed with a glorified humanity. Yet in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* where Oberon and Titania meet in royal rage which instantly reduces the Athenian lovers' quarrels to suburban squabbling, they are human, and magical too. For it is the privilege of poetry to have the best of all worlds at once. Oberon gleams darkly "fell and wrath" with all the power of sorcery, we know his anger has blighted the crops and

> every pelting river made so proud
> That they have overborne their continents.

We know the little western flower will make Titania full of hateful fantasies. And Puck, too, is no dragon-fly elf, but the real, mischief-making spirit of the country people, Robin Goodfellow, Lob-Lie-by-the-Fire, the rural Pan come down the centuries to tie proud Titania spell-bound to Bottom the ass. It is this splendour of the Fairy King and Queen and the bumpkin fun of the mummers which make Mendelssohn's busy fizzy music so madly inappropriate. Not that the elves and fairies are not there, of course with their songs and little size, Peasblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustard-seed. But they are only decoration. No one knew more about the Little People than Shakespeare. Think of Queen Mab in *Romeo and Juliet*, and of Ariel changing his shape and size at will:

> In a cowslip's bell I lie
> There I couch when owls do cry
> On the bat's back I do fly

And it was his knowledge clothed in immortal poetry which endowed the fairy hierarchy with immortality.

Milton, too, wrote of the fairies as full-grown, though his were rather the classic gods with an English difference. *Comus*, you may say, was written for children to act at Ludlow, but *Comus* is no nursery play, though it is a typical fairy story. The themes of these stately Renaissance poems were folklore indeed, recurring in endless variations; the fairy who loves a mortal, the human being lured to fairy-land, the changeling. The Border ballads are full of them — True Thomas who saw a ladye bright

> Come riding down by the Eildon Tree
> Her shirt was of the grass-green silk
> Her mantle of the velvet fyne
> At ilka tett of her horse's mane
> Hang fifty silver bells and nine.

He hailed her as the Queen of Heaven.

> "O no, O no, Thomas," she said,
> "That name does not belong to me
> I am but the queen of fair Elfland
> That am hither come to visit thee."

Then there was Fair Janet, who won her changeling lover Young Tamlane from the train of the Queen:

> Up then spake the Queen of Fairies
> Out o' a bush o' broom
> "She that has borrowed young Tamlane
> Has gotten a stately groom." . . .
>
> "But had I kenned, Tamlane," she says
> "A ladye wad borrowed thee—
> I wad ta'en out thy twa grey e'en
> Put in twa e'en o' tree." . . .
>
> "Had I but had the wit yestreen
> That I hae coft* the day
> I'd paid my kane† seven times to hell
> Ere you'd been won away".

The Romantic Revival was deeply influenced by ballad-poetry; and it is natural enough that Keats returned to the theme of the fairy lover. But *La Belle Dame* and James Hogg's *Kilmeny* were almost the end of the truly adult fairy poems; and the last, written in a musing slow melody, is hard to quote:

> "Kilmeny, Kilmeny, where have you been?"
> Kilmeny looked up with a lovely grace
> But nae smile was seen on Kilmeny's face;
> As still was her look, as still was her e'e
> As the stillness that lay on the emerald lea,
> Or the mist that sleeps on a waveless sea.
> Kilmeny had been she knew not where
> And Kilmeny had seen what she could not declare . . .
> The land of vision it would seem
> And still an everlasting dream.

Tennyson seems to me hardly of the true kin; his romances are too laboriously reconstructed; except for *The Lady of Shallott*, which has the authentic chime. But by then fairy poetry had suffered the fate of fairy-tale, and was made for children only. The tradition lingered, and it was written by serious poets; only from another, dwindled view. Compare the Celtic song of the merman, to his human wife:

> Avore, my heart, the night is dark.
> Wanting fire here, wanting shelter, wanting comfort
> Our baby lies beneath the rock.

With what Matthew Arnold made of it: a family party:

> Children dear, was it yesterday
> (Call once yet) that she went away?
> Once she sate with you and me
> On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
> And the youngest sate on her knee.
> She combed its bright hair, and she tended it well,
> When down swung the sound of a far-off bell . . .

There is nothing left, by the century's end, but the Little Folk. Yeats has a child for his tempting spirit, behind whom the voice sings:

> The wind blows out of the gates of the day
> The wind blows over the lonely of heart
> And the lonely of heart is withered away.
> While the fairies dance in a place apart,
> Shaking their milkwhite feet in a ring,
> Tossing their milkwhite arms in the air . . .

They are unhappy, wicked, creatures, those sung by the moderns; filled with malice against humanity. Perhaps Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* began it. Even De la Mare's fairy "mimble-mambling in the garden" is faintly sinister. There is no gay court of the Queen of Elfland for Charlotte Mew's changeling:

> Why did They bring me here to make me
> Not quite bad, and not quite good?
> Why, unless They're wicked, do They want, in spite, to take me
> Back to their wet, wild, wood?
> And every night, I shall see the windows shining,
> The gold lamp's glow, and the fire's red gleam,
> When the best of us are twining twigs and the rest of us are whining
> In the hollow by the stream.
> Black and chill are Their nights on the wold,
> And They live so long, and They feel no pain.
> I shall grow up, but never grow old,
> I shall always, always be very cold,
> I shall never come home again.

That is a far cry from Titania and Oberon disputing over her "lovely boy stolen from an Indian king." The fairies then could be terrible, but they were beautiful and merry, too. Fairies, like gods, it seems, must be believed in to keep their natures; else they pine away to shadows and disappear from their old haunts. They were at their fullest power when they were the poet's darlings, half dream, half joke, blowing into the house with the scent of a flowery wood dancing in the moonsetting to Oberon's song:

> Through the house give glimmering light
> By the dead and drowsy fire
> Every elf and fairy sprite
> Hop as light as bird from brier.

FREDA WHITE

* coft—bought † kane—tribute

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CHANNEL PACKET

Channel Packet. By RAYMOND MORTIMER. *Hogarth Press.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The critical writings of Mr. Raymond Mortimer have merely those merits which proceed from sensitiveness, industry, humility, a natural liking for literature and its foundation, language, and a strong preference for the agreeable over the disagreeable. He is not a seer or a poet; if his eyeballs began to roll in a frenzy of inspiration, his own cool hand would take his pulse. Nor is he one of those critics who regard themselves as laboratory workers who have every prospect of arriving at such rigid certainties as are afforded by science (or rather by elementary science); though he has probably read all that has been written to the point concerning aesthetics, he does not himself deal with the subject. He has made it his business less to subject works to an exhaustive formal analysis than to judge them as successful or unsuccessful syntheses, and on this level to see each work in relation to the culture which produced it, to see that culture in relation to other cultures, and to see the artist in relation to his work and to his fellow-men. That last branch of his enterprise is banned on bizarre theoretical grounds by the purists, and is in practice attended by enormous difficulties, since the lives of most men are veiled by heavy disguises; but it throws light on the relationship between art and life, which it is necessary to understand in order to discover the ultimate sanction of art. In fact, this impressionist criticism, in which the artist makes no claim to be more than a man of taste and sense, writing about those possessed of gifts he either lacks or has never chosen to exercise, penetrates deeply into reality, if he be well enough equipped. The ambition inherent in literature annuls the modest intention of the writer.

There can be no doubt about Mr. Mortimer's equipment; and so *Channel Packet* is a volume of solid worth as well as charm. He considers the particular, and is careful to do it justice; most of the papers here collected are book reviews which keep loyally to the business in hand, to a degree which is a lesson to some of us, and of these the greater number raise themselves to the dignity of essays by the exploration of some complexity not yet fully understood. There is, for example, that significant review of an insignificant life of Landor, which many readers will be glad to meet again with its recognition, stoical and not resentful, that what is beautiful and wise, with authentic beauty and wisdom, can also be boring. "The personages," he says of the *Imaginary Conversations* and *Pericles and Aspasia*, "whether tribunes or cardinals, virgins and courtesans, are as unvarious as caryatids." By letting his page glow with a reflection of Landor's splendid style, he recreates the static splendours of Landor's imagined world, and shows that, among the respects in which the universe falls short of reasonable requirements, is the circumstance that there does not spring up a natural bridge to connect the reader's attention and every work of art which would profit and delight him. It is the business of the artist to build this bridge and sometimes that is beyond his powers, though they have been fully adequate to enable him to create a work of art. Noting such disharmonies which perpetually accompany the harmonies in the world of art, so that perfection is most often a remote remembrance of a faint promise, Mr. Mortimer passes from subject to subject of the most varied kinds, from George Herbert to Virginia Woolf, from Lytton Strachey to Dr. Johnson. Nor is it always sympathy which impels him in his course. Lack of sympathy sometimes does very well by him. He has a most entertaining paper on our poor Ezra, who has given a new meaning to the expression "Pound foolish." He has also a brief but salutary article on "Beachcomber," surely one of the least attractive figures, because one of the most spurious, of the modern literary scene. A joke is, as they so justly say, a joke. But there is something not endearing about a fearless satirist who in fact never makes an attack on any authority or class likely to retort, and who adopts a moralist pretension, yet has filled a daily column year after year without making any noticeable propaganda in favour of truth, courage, goodness, or beauty, or even the elementary decencies. The inclusion of this incongruous subject throws a light on the other persons mentioned in this book, and on the meaning of culture.

Only in two instances can Mr. Mortimer's judgment be questioned. One is of no great importance; the sweetness of Mr. Mortimer's disposition leads him to refer far too kindly to a work published some years ago under the name of *Return Journey*, a peculiarly sticky exhalation from the mouth of darkest Debrett. But the other is of greater importance. It concerns a French author, oddly enough, for Mr. Mortimer is at his best when he crosses the Channel. He is familiar enough with the corpus of French literature to escape the delusion, engendered in many English people by the kind of French books prescribed in our schools and universities, that its dominant characteristic is serene classicism. His *Introduction to Balzac* really succeeds in suggesting the vast scope of that genius who oscillated between the invention of characters as living as Shakespeare's and such generalisations as the definition of Lancashire as "a district where women die of love"; and his paper on Mallarmé is as just in its presentation of that strange life, spent in an effort which was at one and the same time a heroic research into the very essence of literature and a companion enterprise to that of the aged man who used "to hunt for haddock's eyes among the heather bright, and work them into waistcoat buttons." (One can think of nothing yet written in English which throws so much light on what Flaubert was about when he wrote *Bouvard et Pécuchet*.) Mr. Mortimer's paper on Proust, too, is most valuable, particularly in its rebuttal of the charge of snobbery which is often brought against him ("the one fault of his picture of the Faubourg is overharshness") and its realisation that time shows him as "one of the supreme comic writers, the Molière or Ben Jonson of the novel." The soundness of these judgments makes it more surprising that he should so completely concur in what was perhaps the mere fashion of overestimating André Gide, even to the extent of calling him "the most distinguished writer alive."

Surely Gide is one of those writers who fascinated their generation not by their acts of creation but by their presentation of the most prevalent neuroses. Mr. Mortimer refers respectfully to the duality which is Gide's subject matter, and which he himself has described in the sentence, *Je ne suis qu'un petit garçon qui s'amuse — doublé d'un pasteur protestant qui l'ennuie*. But this duality is of a type frequently presented in the writings of psychoanalysts. It arises out of the childish feeling that the universe must be judged, that human beings are innocent or guilty. At first the father is seen as innocent with the innocence of supreme authority, and the son is guilty because he often breaks the moral law imposed by the father; but later the father appears guilty, because he is involved in the forbidden secret of sex, and the son is innocent because he is not so involved. It then becomes right and just that the innocent son should rebel against this unworthy father, which he does by sexual experiment and by such breaches of the moral law as lying and stealing. When Gide is dominated by the first stage of this fantasy he writes such novels as *La Porte Etroite*, in which Mr. Mortimer rightly detects "a certain *niaiserie*, a flavour at once sweet and insipid, like that of sago"; when it is the second stage of the fantasy which controls him he writes such novels as *Les Faux Monnayeurs*, in which the young are represented as lecherous and criminal little monsters, who are somehow also heroic and infinitely desirable. It is hard to believe that if Gide were a really great man so much of him could be related to the theories of Freud, who himself admitted that he could account for the rabbits all right but could not bring down the big stuff. Moreover, though it is a poor heart which never rejoices over the *Police News*, it is most unlikely that a really great man could have been dominated by such fantasies to the extent of spending so much of his time on the flat presentation of *faits divers* concerning criminal little boys or (as in *La Séquestrée de Poitiers*) news items which parents would forbid their children to read. Mr. Mortimer mentions with respect, as all Gide's French admirers would do, his conception of *l'acte gratuit*, as displayed in the murder in *Les Caves du Vatican*, which is "unmotivated—or it would be more accurate to say it can be of no practical advantage to the murderer. It gives him, however, a sense of power like that enjoyed by a creative artist." But that conception is to be found completely expressed, in a short story by Balzac.

It might be fairly suggested that there are two reasons for Gide's reputation. One, which is not valid, is his personal charm, which has made it easy for him to collect a group of disciples. (But would any really great man care to do that?) The other, which is valid, is his style. When he began to write, the quality of brilliance which French writers had inherited from their eighteenth-century predecessors had become excessive, and the experimentalists of the nineteenth century had scored too many successes. French prose needed purification, and that is what Gide gave it, with amazing technical ability. But perhaps that is what Mr. Mortimer means by calling Gide "the most distinguished writer alive," for one can, indeed, think of no other author who has done a like service for the *matière* of literature. *Channel Packet* is full of occasions for such arguments as these, which make the reader dig deep in his memory and formulate the foundations of his beliefs, and will never lead him far from delighted agreement with Mr. Mortimer. The sport is better because Mr. Mortimer is not one of those critics who have been impelled to their career by queasiness which longs for opportunities to reject. As he very sensibly says, "The truth, at least as I increasingly see it, is that literature is a very impure art, to which the rigidly aesthetic criterions that apply to painting, and even more to music, can be applied only with a great sacrifice of pleasure."

REBECCA WEST

A PHILOSOPHER'S UTOPIA

An Unknown Land. By VISCOUNT SAMUEL. *Allen & Unwin.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Viscount Samuel would not, I suspect, thank me for expatiating upon the usual traveller's tall story-telling, the voyage, the shipwreck, the preliminary troubles with inhospitable natives which usher in his Utopia; nor upon the geographical setting in the South Pacific and the historical derivation of Bensalem from Bacon's New Atlantis; nor does he, I imagine, desire his reviewer to provide a *résumé* of the inevitable virtues of his Utopians, their dislike of smoking, their electrically driven cars, the development of the sense of smell and the olfactory arts, the deer and gazelles that wander in the streets, the attractive houses, the seemliness of the household utensils at once (and how inevitably) so simple, so graceful and so strong, the lack of crowding and all the rest of the Utopiast's stock-in-trade. I doubt even, if he would value a discussion of his more up-to-date proposals, such as the inoculation of citizens against cancer at sixteen, and the artificial postponement of the closing of the sutures of their craniums by the insertion of vacuum caps into the skulls of infants, thereby increasing the measurement of the skull by four inches and the weight of the brain by four ounces, with a corresponding enlargement of knowledge—and, apparently, of virtue, a new and more advanced code of conduct adopted by the Bensals being specifically described as being based on greater knowledge and inspired by greater intelligence.

I do not dwell on these and other features, I do not even describe the social and economic arrangements of Bensalem, among whom the reader perhaps will not be surprised to learn that

"work was not undertaken for its own sake but in order to provide the things we need," because of my conviction that what really interests Viscount Samuel is the intellectual achievements of the Bensals, more particularly on the side of philosophy and science. It is here, I take it, that he conceives himself to be really trailing his coat, and it is here that, for my part, I find myself unable to resist the so handsomely offered invitation to tread on it. The most distinctive of his proposals in this sphere amounts to a revival of the Renaissance. The "large heads," once securely established, set up a commission to inquire into the existing state of knowledge. The Commission establishes an Institute, "the Sieve," through which all existing ideas, beliefs, legends, superstitions, sciences, philosophy and history must pass. The comparatively little that survives the test is divided into four classes: the absolute truths, the possible truths, the poetically or sentimentally valuable myths and the body of facts belonging to the sciences.

The first of these classes, known as "the Gist," continually renewed and brought up to date constitutes the basis of the knowledge and culture of the Bensals. Again one must deny oneself the pleasure of commenting upon subsidiary intellectual features, e.g. the dual conception of history as human drama, "the story of heroes and statesmen, dynasties and war," and the record of human experience as a whole, including biology, sociology and what Mr. Wells calls ecology; the strictly utilitarian ethics, conduct being adjudged right when it conduces to the welfare—"welfare," we are told, being interpreted in its widest sense but never, alas, defined—of the community, and the psychological determinism according to which such conduct becomes "from earliest childhood a matter of habit," sin having apparently gone by the board.

I resist, I say, the temptation of following these attractive hares, in order that I may have the leisure and the space to tilt a philosophical lance at two points, one the matter and the other the method of Viscount Samuel's exposition. First, among the absolute truths we find a rejection of idealist philosophy. Man's mind, we are informed, has evolved in a universe which is independent of it. The reason for this is that "since, for æons of time, the universe was, while man was not, no theory of the universe can hold good which would not equally have held good then. A metaphysic to be true must apply also to that man-less universe." Possibly; possibly not. I do not think a competent idealist would have difficulty in disposing of this particular argument, but not being a competent idealist I content myself with pointing out that Viscount Samuel proceeds to make great play with the very Idealism he has begun by discarding. A wall, we are told, is not solid; it is a whirl of particles of non-solid electricity; a rose is not red; redness is a sensation in the brain (the word surely should have been "mind"), produced by rays of light reflected by the non-red molecules of the rose petal. Sunsets are not beautiful; beauty is an emotion felt by the mind at seeing the non-beautiful combinations of the non-colours (Viscount Samuel says "colours," forgetting that he has already relegated them to the mind) of the setting sun. Whence, then, do solidity, colour, beauty, derive? They are the creations of the human mind projected on to the canvas of a non-solid, non-coloured, non-beautiful universe. Again possibly, and again possibly not. But, if so, what of the preceding rejection of idealism on the ground that the universe preceded man's mind? If we are the creators of all the qualities of the universe that we see, why not of the universe that preceded us; if of the present, why not of the supposedly past, in which event it would not, in fact, be past at all. Viscount Samuel may object that this is to subject to over-meticulous philosophic scrutiny a work of imagination intended for the interested public and not the professional philosopher. But here my difficulty in regard to method arises. Either these philosophical views are the Viscount's or they are not. If they are not, why their elaborate development and attribution to the large-headed Bensals? If they are, what purpose is served by taking them out of their proper setting, which is a book of straight philosophy and putting them into the improper setting of an imaginary Utopia? Is it, perhaps, in order that the author, when pressed, may divert the pursuing critic by pointing out that these are not his views at all but only those of the benighted Bensals? But then the Viscount does not think the Bensals benighted, but in all sorts of ways superior to the English.

The fact that I have ventured upon these criticisms does not necessarily connote doubt. On the contrary, as one who has been brought up in the tradition of another prophetic writing by Viscount Samuel and lived to see the remarkable verification of its prophecies, I am the last person to let a note of scepticism enter into my appraisement of the Samuelite future. Indeed, the Viscount's vaticinatory prowess has long been known to many besides myself. C. E. M. JOAD

THE AMERICAN CAPITAL

Reveille in Washington. 1860–1865. By MARGARET LEECH. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 18*s.*

Miss Leech's book is, perhaps, less history than inspired anecdotage. What she has sought to do is to paint a portrait of Washington in the critical years of the Civil War; and it can be said at once that her pages are full of interest and illumination. From the habits of the White House to the conditions of the wounded in the hospitals she gives us a mass of detail, all of it significant, and some of it of real importance. It is not easy to summarise the meaning of the whole. The Washington she reveals is still less the capital of a great empire than an overgrown provincial city, in which everybody still knows everybody's else's business, in which most people are aware that they are transient visitors rather than permanent inhabitants, in which the main function is the retailing of gossip, and in which the character of its life is set less by the permanent principles of a civilisation expressed there than by the ebb and flow of embarrassed phantoms whose roots are set in the states from which they come. The inner life of America is still in its states; and Washington is a whirlpool into which its denizens are temporarily sucked rather than a source from which the main lines of American civilisation receive definition.

Perhaps it is this feature which gives Miss Leech's book its fascination. No one seems really at home in her pages. Everyone, from the President down, is conscious that he is a visitor who will presently depart. Everyone, except the President, is, accordingly, playing a part; the main anxiety is to strike an attitude which will be a matter for comment by others. It is a capital which lacks self-confidence and even self-respect. The mood is febrile; nothing seems to last. Almost everyone is self-conscious, and half afraid that the assumed pose will not be noticed. It is a city half anxious to be a Court, and yet aware that its protocol must not contradict the democratic formulæ which the era of Jefferson Buck required. Then, as now, it is the great whispering gallery of the world; and the only thing that is certain about its secrets is that they will be revealed. Miss Leech brings out well the interplay of the persons who stride across her stage, the solemn nullity of General McClellan the strutting ambition of Chief Justice Chase, the tragic and half-insane combination of jealousy and vanity which made Mrs. Lincoln so impossible, the pose of Mrs. Sprague as the Crown Princess, and,

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above all, the utter and remote melancholy of the President. Everyone is excited, and everyone is half-afraid. From time to time the rebel armies are near enough and dangerous enough to remind them that, amid all the feverish search for life, death lurks around the corner. So that while most people are, as it were, striking their attitudes, most of them, too, are making ready to race from the risks that the South may, by some sudden sortie, impose. The whole story reminds one of nothing so much as an extended version of the famous picture Thackeray drew of the Waterloo ball in *Vanity Fair*.

It would be a task of enormous interest to have a chronicler of Miss Leech's patience and ingenuity draw a similar picture of Washington in the epoch of Woodrow Wilson; it is, perhaps, too early to have an investigator do for it in the time of President Roosevelt what Mr. and Mrs. Lynd did so admirably for Middletown. A comparison of Lincoln's Washington with that of Woodrow Wilson's would, I suspect, show more physical than spiritual changes. No doubt it would be a city of far greater sophistication, far more conscious that the world is listening to its gossip, better organised for administrative purposes, with a protocol more emphatic and hierarchical. But I venture to suspect that a visitor from the Sixties would, when he had made the necessary physical adjustments, find that the process of acclimatisation was far less difficult than we are tempted to imagine. The position of the President would show that same lonely eminence, where there are temporary confidantes but no permanent intimates. Congress would look much the same; a group of Senators who have been there so long that they tend to regard the President as a passing phenomenon whom it is their business to discipline, and another group, less schooled to the routine of superiority, who envy the ease with which their seniors teach the President his place; and the great crowd of jostling Congressmen fearful lest, in two years' time, they exchange the feverish, if Baroque, ease of the Mayflower Hotel for the half-rural impotence of Phœnix, Arizona, or Bloomington, Indiana. The Supreme Court would not look very different; men would still conspire to treat its members as demi-gods aloof from normal emotions while they whispered to one another about that turn of the Convention's wheel which might, in the light of his wholly non-political decisions, bring Mr. Justice Blank within sight of the presidential nomination. There would be the same great rival hostesses who dream that at their tables only the inner secrets are told, and the same suave diplomats maintaining that their elaborate silence is a screen for masterly discretion. The great change, no doubt, would be in the upper ranks of the temporary civil service; Lincoln would not have dreamed that war was an opportunity for the academic world to prove that it never more than half-believed the doctrines it purveyed to youth. And, at the base of the pyramid, there would be the same vast army of clerks and stenographers, more feminine now, and far more elegant, but still fantastically underpaid and dreaming of the promotion that does not come.

I hope Miss Leech will write this sequel. Few subjects are more fascinating than the history of this overgrown village which became, without knowing it, the capital of a great commonwealth. She has amply proved in this volume that she could make her narrative worthy of its superb theme.

HAROLD J. LASKI

A LITERARY CRIMINAL

Suburban Gentleman: The Life of Thomas Griffiths Wainewright. By JOHN LINDSEY. *Rich and Cowan.* 12s. 6d.

The career of Thomas Wainewright presents a fruitful field of investigation, not only to the amateur of crime but to every student of the possibilities of human nature. Apart from the crimes they committed, most modern murderers have been drably commonplace. Thus Landru, stripped of his horrific legend, proves to have been a petty amorist and cheap-jack swindler who exercised his seduction on none but the humblest victims; while Palmer is revealed as the gambler and Don Juan of a small provincial town. Both were vulgar, grasping and ill-educated; neither of them would have been accepted in any society more distinguished or more exacting than the world in which they moved. But Wainewright was—or, at least, appeared to be—a genuinely sensitive and really gifted man. Lamb praised the light-heartedness of his periodical essays; Clare, Dickens, Macready were all his friends. He drew—in a meretricious but exceedingly fluent style. He wrote—and his productions showed taste and feeling. It is true that his sense of luxury and his absorption in his own personality seemed somewhat over-developed. But he had a pleasant flow of imagery and was evidently much in love with the art of self-expression.

It is interesting, then, to attempt to determine at what point the talented spendthrift (who had written of himself that he was "certainly an amiable creature," and that every action of his life emanated from a desire to please) became the cold-blooded murderer who condemned several human beings, among others his plain, trusting, stupid sister-in-law, to a particularly appalling and painful death. He wanted to remain a gentleman—in spite of bill-collectors. He was anxious to keep up the dignified suburban mansion he had inherited from his maternal grandfather, Dr. Ralph Griffiths, publisher of the influential and respectable *Monthly Review* (on which he had employed Goldsmith) and of the less respectable but more profitable *Fanny Hill*. So the virtuoso became first a forger, afterwards a murderer—almost succeeded in his designs—failed by a hair's breadth—and finished his life in the miserable obscurity of an Antipodean convict settlement. Wainewright's tragedy has already been retraced in some detail by Mr. Jonathan Curling in an interesting and carefully documented book entitled *Janus Weathercock*, published, and reviewed in these columns, some four years ago. Opening *Suburban Gentleman*, a reviewer naturally asks himself what Wainewright's new biographer can have found to add. The answer is that Mr. Lindsey has added very little and has obviously been much indebted to Mr. Curling's volume. His unconscious memory must have played him false, for the parallelism between Mr. Lindsey's book and that of his predecessor is often rather startling. A very large number of quotations chosen by Mr. Curling have also been selected by Mr. Lindsey, and the epithets he attaches to characters in the story are often surprisingly alike. It is regrettable that Mr. Lindsey should not have thought fit to include in *Suburban Gentleman* either bibliography or index. PETER QUENNELL

A Narrow Street. By ELLIOT PAUL. *Cresset Press.* 10s. 6d.

One begins with interest Mr. Elliot Paul's reminiscences of life in a small Paris street during the last twenty years. Then one perceives that his book is a novel, in which he is one of the characters, but if the critic is indulgent, he will judge it as reporting rather than as imaginative art. Even when taken on this level, the book could easily be dismissed. It is packed with rudimentary mistakes. As often as not the French is inaccurate, and though the author likes airing his political views, he cannot even distinguish between the Croix du Feu and the Camelots du Roi. Like so many American journalists, he is magnificently severe upon the cowardice of the French and English during the Spanish War and the Munich crisis. Moreover, he never tires of contrasting the low standard of life in France with the high standard

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in the U.S.A. But while he emphasises the squalor of *petit bourgeois* ways, he does recognise the courage, individuality and sociability of the French. This sincere appreciation goes far to make up for many unfair, inaccurate and irritating comments. The book cannot be recommended to those who do not know France. But those who do will find much in it to delight as well as to exasperate them. We are left wondering how a man clever enough to write such an account could be silly enough not to ask some French friend to look at the manuscript and to correct the more glaring mistakes.

Week-end Competitions

• No. 673

Set by Roger Marvell

Competitors are invited to compose clerihews on the names of foreign towns or villages. Any number may be sent in, and the usual prizes of two guineas and half a guinea are offered for the best pair.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, January 4th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 670

Set by Raymond Mortimer

The usual prizes are offered for the best English version of the following poem. Competitors are at liberty to make any adaptations they think desirable.

LE DORMEUR DU VAL.

C'est un trou de verdure où chante une rivière
Accrochant follement aux herbes des haillons
D'argent, où le soleil, de la montagne fière,
Luit : c'est un petit val qui mousse de rayons.

Un soldat jeune, bouche ouverte, tête nue
Et la nuque baignant dans le frais cresson bleu,
Dort ; il est étendu dans l'herbe, sous la nue,
Pâle dans son lit où la lumière pleut.

Les pieds dans les glaïeuls, il dort. Souriant comme
Sourirait un enfant malade, il fait un somme.
Nature, berce-le chaudement ; il a froid.

Les parfums ne font pas frissoner sa narine ;
Il dort dans le soleil, la main sur sa poitrine
Tranquille. Il a deux trous rouges au côté droit.

Report by Raymond Mortimer

This sonnet by Rimbaud brought 197 entries. Although it does not seem very difficult, the 12th and 14th lines floored most of the competitors. S. H. Jarvis suggests, rightly, I believe, that "cresson bleu" is the cuckoo-flower, but "cresses" come very happily into English verse. Two entries seem to me in a class apart, those of F. C. C. and William Bliss. The former has taken what I consider just the right amount of liberty with the original—it is noticeable that the more literal versions, of which Allan M. Laing's is far the best, show signs of awkwardness. I recommend that a first prize of a guinea and a half go to F. C. C., a second prize of a guinea to William Bliss, and extra consolation prizes of five shillings be provided for Allan M. Laing and Fouché. The two last I selected only with difficulty from a bunch including the entries of Marhaus, W. E. A. Harris, G. C. Coutts, L. E. J., Orlando, Simon Bottle, H. O. Meredith, Little Billee, H. W. Thompson, Daphne Castell, Donald Campbell, R. E. Latham, K. R. R., Guy Innes, Guy Williams, John Hall, Veritas, L. V. Upward, E. M. Herring, I. M. Bellis, G. de Vavasour, M. S., and Praed.

SLEEP IN THE VALLEY.

There's a green hollow, where the river chants,
And slips in arrows past the water plants,
Silver in sunshine from the proud hill's height ;
A wooded valley, small and brimmed with light.

There the young soldier sleeps with thrown-back head
In the cool cresses of the river-bed ;
Unmoved upon the grassy verge he lies,
Pale in the rays that pour from summer skies.

Feet stretched among the rushes, sleeping still,
He smiles as children do when they are ill.
Cherish him warmly, Earth ; he is cold. Be kind.
His nostrils cannot drink the flowering wind ;
An arm across his breast, he sleeps in the sun,
His temples bare, and a red hole in one.

(F. C. C.)

THE SLEEPER IN THE HOLLOW.

There is a hollow where a streamlet sings,
Twitching in play the nodding maidenhair,
And through the trees the strong noon sunshine flings
A dappled shade—and all is mossy there.

Bare-throated, there a young air-pilot lies,
Half-hidden where the long cool cresses creep ;
The dappled shadows shift across his eyes,
And in the quietness he seems asleep.

He sleeps, pale-smiling, like a fretful child,
The sanicle and sorrel flowers among,
His fair head pillowed in a wood-wren's nest.

No scent comes to him from the wood flowers wild
For there, above his right arm loosely flung,
Two crimson wells are oozing from his breast.

(WILLIAM BLISS)

THE SLEEPER IN THE VALLEY.

Green hollow, and the murmur of a stream,
Glancing in shreds of silver through the grass ;
From lofty hilltop slants the sun's warm beam :
Light foams to radiance in the narrow pass.

A soldier lad sleeps there, among the flowers
Bareheaded, open-mouthed, beneath blue skies :
Cool cresses bathe his nape ; light's dancing showers
Pour on the couch where pale, outstretched, he lies.

With irises about his feet he sleeps,
A sick child's smile upon his parted lips :
O, clasp him closer, Earth, for he is cold.

No nostril quivers, though sweet perfumes ride :
Calm in the sun he sleeps, an arm flung wide.
Two red holes in his side have stained the mould.

(ALLAN M. LAING)

In a green dell a singing stream entwines
With silver rags and tatters grassy ways,
Where down the mountain side the proud sun shines,
Gilding the little valley with his rays.
A soldier boy, mouth open and bare head,
Is sleeping where the river wanders by,
Wild flowers make his pillow, grass his bed :
His face is pale and upturned to the sky.
He's cold. O Nature, fondle him awhile
Among the irises. He seems to smile,
Like a sick child, forgetting all his pains.
The heavy perfume troubles not his sleep ;
One hand lies on his heart ; he slumbers deep.
On his right side there are two purple stains.

(FOUCHE)

BARCLAYS BANK

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COLONIES' GREAT EFFORT

THE annual general meeting of Barclays Bank (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas) was held in London on December 21st.

The following are extracts from the statement by the chairman (Sir John Caulcutt, K.C.M.G.) on the report and accounts for the year ended September 30th, 1942 (circulated before the meeting):—

The balance sheet again shows a strong liquid position and the Cash in Hand and at Bankers and Gold Bullion is again in excess of 30 per cent. of the Liabilities. The Net Profit for the year amounted to £419,611, and it is proposed to pay a final dividend of 4 per cent. (actual) on the Cumulative Preference Stock and of 3½ per cent. (actual) on the "A" Stock and on the "B" Shares, subject to income tax.

The inter-war period had seen a steady increase in the volume of Colonial products, although the prices of some of them had been subjected to violent fluctuations. In regard to those particular commodities, such as rubber, tin, sugar and tea, which were controlled by regulation schemes, the producers had a more fortunate experience. The underlying reasons for the steady increase in the volume of production can, I think, be looked for in the general political and economic system which gave wide scope to enterprise, British and non-British alike. We should do well also to remember the scientific advisers, many of whom have been provided by Government agencies, and who have improved planting material, advised on planting methods, and assisted in orderly marketing of products.

MARKET CHANGES

The general dislocation and loss of markets, which occurred through the first period of this war, were met by schemes for bulk purchases of staple crops, such as cocoa, sugar and tea, these arrangements being somewhat akin to the vast bulk purchasing arrangements entered into by the British and Dominion Governments, covering the entire crops of such articles as wheat, wool and other vital necessities. All Colonial Governments were urged to stimulate the production of food, largely in order to save shipping, with the result that production rapidly increased. After the fall of France a greatly increased demand arose for certain Colonial products, synchronising with increased difficulties for producers of other commodities, to meet which schemes were devised to help the growers of such crops as citrus fruits and bananas. All these changes have naturally had their reactions on the business of the Bank.

As a consequence of the entry of Japan into the war, and the subsequent loss of some of the areas producing materials of vital importance for war purposes, great efforts have been made to develop alternative sources of supply in other parts of the Colonial Empire.

The Revenues of the Colonies which we serve have been buoyant during the war period. Large official contributions have been made to the Government here for war expenditure, but in the summer of 1940, at the request of His Majesty's Government, this policy was altered, and contributions gave place to loans without interest, in order that the money might be available when required in the various Colonies themselves for reconstruction work.

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Notice

THE Czechoslovak Institute wishes to make it clear that its rooms are not available for ordinary political meetings. A recent meeting convened there by the Liberal Party was for the purpose of forming an International Youth Organisation.

Entertainments

MERCURY, W.11. PARK 5700. From Dec. 26th, Ibsen's "Hedda Gabler." From Jan. 3rd, Becque's "Parisienne." Sonia Dresdel in both plays.

UNITY Theatre. New Revue. "Let's Be Offensive." Thurs., Fri., Sat., Sun., 7 p.m.; members and associates only. Membership, 2s. 1 Goldington St., N.W.1. EUS. 5391.

ARTS (Tem 7541). Evgs. (ex. Mon.), 6 Sun., 2.30. "Holy Isle"; evgs., 9; Sat., 2.30: "Maria Marten." Mems. only. Th. Mship, 5s.

ORPHEUM, Golders Green. Spe. 9741. Sunday next (27th) at 7. p.m., Carol Concert, including works by Byrd, Gibbons, Purcell, and Handel. Christmas music from "The Messiah"; Bach: excerpts from the Christmas Oratorio. London Philharmonic Orchestra; Morley College choir. Conductor, Michael Tippett. All seats bookable, 6s. to 2s.

Exhibition, Lectures and Meetings

CHINESE Woodcuts at the Berkeley Galleries, 20 Davies Street, W.1. 10–5, Sat. 10–1.

ETHICAL Church, Queensway, W.2. Dec. 27th, at 11.30. H. J. BLACKHAM: "Union of the World."

SOUTH Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., W.C.1., Dec. 27. No Meeting.

INDIAN Independence Day Public Demonstration, Kingsway Hall, Kingsway, W.C.2. Tuesday, Jan. 26th, 7 p.m. Speakers: W. COVE, M.P.; FRED MESSER, M.P.; S. S. SILVERMAN, M.P.; VERA BRITTAIN, FENNER BROCKWAY; F. HORRABIN and Indian speakers. Please send delegates. Res. seats, 1s., from Committee of Indian Congressmen, 70 New Oxford St., W.C.1.

THE Progressive League (F.P.S.I.) are holding a conference at Conway Hall, Jan. 8th–10th. Title: "The Political Ferment: Do We Need a New Religion?" Speakers: OLAF STAPLEDON, BARBARA WOOTTON, PROFESSOR FLUGEL and one other. Last Session Open Debate. Social Features, Dance, Music and Poetry. Fees: Members, 7s. 6d.; Non-Members, 10s. Limited number of tickets. Apply: HON. SEC., 49, Nassington Rd., N.W.3.

INDIAN Freedom Campaign. Conference, Conway Hall, Sunday, January 3rd, 2.30 p.m.–8 p.m. (two sessions). Fenner Brockway, Reginald Reynolds, Wilfred Wellock, Lionel Fielden, Edward Thompson, J. F. Horrabin, etc. Delegates' tickets, 1s. 6d.; visitors, 2s. Indian Freedom Campaign, 8 Endsleigh Gdns., W.C.1, or at door.

Appointments Vacant and Wanted

None of the vacancies for women advertised in this journal relates to a woman between 18 and 31 unless such a woman (a) has living with her a child of hers under the age of 14, or (b) is registered under the Blind Persons Acts, or (c) has a Ministry of Labour permit to allow her to obtain employment by individual efforts.

HEPTON Rural District Council. Government Evacuation Scheme. Wanted, Cook-Housekeeper for Hostel for 15 boys (8 to 11 years) and 4 staff at Heptonstall, Hebden Bridge. Would be required take full charge of cooking, housekeeping and bookkeeping (boys have mid-day meal at school). Salary £78 p.a. Applications, accompanied by copies of two recent testimonials should be forwarded to reach Clerk to the Council, District Bank Chambers, Hebden Bridge, not later than Dec. 28th, 1942.

MEDICAL psycho-therapist wanted for the Davidson Clinic, Edinburgh, to undertake treatment of the neuroses and advise on co-ordination of family relationships. Salary £300 p.a., with opportunity for private practice. Apply HONORARY SECRETARY, Davidson Clinic, 4 Fettes Row, Edinburgh.

EXPERIENCED shorthand-typist required. Able to work on her own initiative. Good salary. Excellent prospects. Please apply in handwriting to Box 8115, 10 Hertford Street, London, W.1.

DRAWING and Tracing for women (all ages) for war work. Write for particulars of training to West End Drawing Office, 107 Park Street, London, W.1.

EXPERIENCED Cook-Caterer, preferably domestic science trained required in January for Radnorshire war nursery. 3 in kitchen. Applicant with child between 2 and 5 considered. Write MRS. J. B. PRIESTLEY, Broxwood Court, Leominster, Herefordshire.

TUTOR wanted for four children on farm, to Matric. standard. Terms and qualification to Box 25, Smiths Library, Penzance.

WANTED urgently for small co-ed. school. Froebel Teacher. Domestic helpers and gardener. Apply PRINCIPAL, Hurtwood School, Peaslake, Surrey. Abinger 119.

A CAPABLE mother's help required; 2 children attend school. Modern flat. Good and happy home. Write Box L5.

APPLICATIONS invited for two vacancies on staff international pacifist organisation: shorthand-typist, preferably with languages, and shorthand-typist to take charge complicated filing system. Write stating age, experience, salary required, with photo. if poss. Box L24.

GENTLEWOMAN wanted to take out girl of two and baby in seaside town each day for few hours. Comfortable home offered, music and books, etc. Box L23.

WANTED, house mother to run school boarding house 8–12 children. Ringwood, Hants. Box L39.

Appointments—continued

HANDICRAFTS Instructress required at Surrey County Sanatorium, Milford, nr. Godalming. Candidates should be experienced and preferably possess a certificate in occupational therapy. Salary according to experience at a point on the grade £150 x £7½–£200 p.a., plus war bonus 10s. p.w. Apply to SUPERINTENDENT.

WORKING housekeeper, small modern cottage, 4 minutes station and bus, 2 in family. Baby Feb., birth nursing home. HORNE, Shanagarry, Jordans, nr. Beaconsfield, Bucks.

GOOD home offered to elderly lady or refugee in return for light household duties, Loughton, Essex, nr. London. Box L47.

EXPERIENCED gardener and also one domestic worker required by small co-ed. school, S. Midlands. Apply Box K67.

SHORTHAND instructor required and other commercial subjects. Give full partics. of age, qualifications and salary required. Box L31.

WOMAN req. assist in sm. farmhouse. Partly cooking and partly farmwork (reser.) or secretarial. Thorburn, Shipton Gorge, Bridport.

WOMAN wanted to join the new Adelphi Centre Community Farm to help with cooking and hsewk. Apply Middleton Murray, Lodge Farm, Thelnetham, Diss, Norfolk.

WIDOWER (33), musician, 2 daughters (6 and 8) offers home to young mother in exchange for running house. Write DR. COLE, Greenways, Dorking.

LADY wanted to take charge of gentleman's house near London. Daily help for rough. Comfortable home. Box L17.

WANTED qualified kindergarten teacher (exempt) for few pupils in private house. Live in. Box L34.

WAITER and waitress or two waitresses wanted for first-class country-town hotel. £3 per week and live in, with separate rooms, h. & c. Very comfortable place for two friends or sisters, etc. Antelope Hotel, Dorchester, Dorset.

CULT., intell. foreign lady, scholar, educ., 25–60, perfect English and typing, wanted half-days (mornings) as companion-secretary by Cont. woman lecturer (Cent. Lond.). Box L3.

HELPER wanted in evacuated London nursery school now near Cambridge. Must be good needlewoman. Res. occupation. Apply Box L4.

JOURNALIST (ex-officer) requires educated housekeeper-assistant with interest in literary and political work. London. Box L8.

WANTED, grass widow, child wel., sh. single lady's labour-saving house and do cooking Miss BARRAN, Tuggs Corner, Lewes, Sussex.

RESIDENT man warden wanted for Settlement in Paddington. Special opportunity to build up adult mixed club. Write, giving full particulars, CHAIRMAN, Beauchamp Lodge Club, 2 Warwick Crescent, W.2.

SECRETARY wanted for new biological research team (natural history). Write, stating qualifications and experience, to Box L20.

COOK-CATERER, educated Oxford woman, experienced and skilled, seeks full-size catering job or post as cook-caterer to worthwhile group. Box L40.

PUBLIC School Man, ex-R.N.V.R. Interesting post req., pref. some outdoor work. Six years' office exp. Box L27.

FRIENDLY alien (22), med. grnds. (formerly T.B.) incap. work nat. importance, artistic interests, typ., Fr., Ger., wants job in gallery, bookshop, or similar. Box L22.

C.O. 18 months land work, requires position in which genuine interest can be taken with opportunity further tractor experience. Box L42.

WANTED immed. intg. job. Woman (40's) some secl. exp. shtd/typ. bk-kpg. Pref. S. of London or Surrey. Box L15.

SCHOOL matron requires responsible position; experienced clerical and needlework. Box L41.

FRENCH lady, exp. teacher French, English, seeks post in good school. Box K82.

NURSE-COMPANION fully qualified for mental and nerve patients; wide experience. Highly recommended. Box K86.

ARTIST, med. exempt, requires position, whole or part-time. Prefer own line, but willing consider anything. Box K94.

C.O., exempt (30), married, Fellow Chartered Insurance Institute, four languages, adaptable, with initiative and executive ability, seeks responsible position anywhere. Box K98.

YOUNG woman (University, writing, theatrical, B.B.C. Russian Monitoring exp.) seeks full/part-time post. Pref. in publishing, on journal, or where Russian needed. Box K74.

YNG. teacher in C.D. can visit alt. days in or nr. London. Qual., exp., enthus. Main Eng., Lat. Subsids. Object: help, not gain. Box K72.

MARRIED woman pacifist, 31, seeks prog. post as working-trainee in Birmingham/Midlands. Interested Chiropody, Naturopathy, Nursery Teaching, Social Work. Box K69.

REFUGEE 16½ yrs. leav. tech. school, good maths., drg., seeks post with quant. surv., civ. eng. LIPPMANN, 60 Lilian Rd., S.W.16.

IRISHMAN, 20's, expt., ener., good refs., B.Comm., shthd., typing, sks. post. Box K89.

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